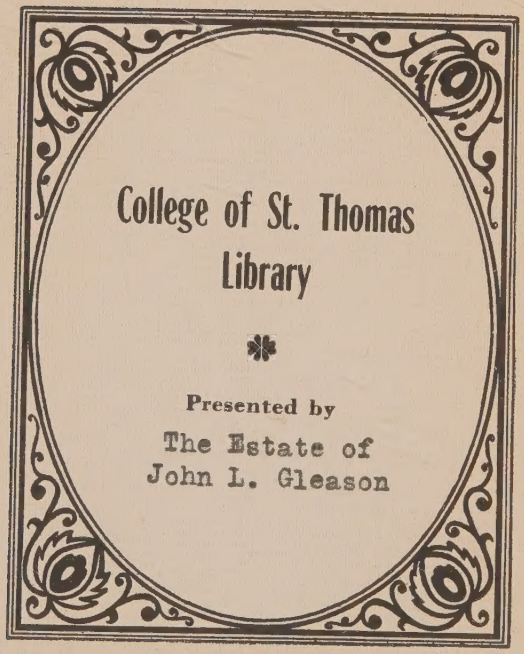
St. Thomas/O'Shaughnessy-Frey Library
3 0516 00723 1045

ALFRED FABRE-LUCE

LOCARNO

THE REALITY

College of St. Thomas Library



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

https://archive.org/details/locarnoreality0000alfr

LOCARNO

THE REALITY

THE WAR AND THE PEACE:

Interpretations and Analyses

THE GENESIS OF THE WORLD WAR

By Harry Elmer Barnes

A FRENCHMAN LOOKS AT THE PEACE

By Alcide Ébray

THE LIMITATIONS OF VICTORY

By Alfred Fabre-Luce

LORD GREY AND THE WORLD WAR

By Hermann Lutz

ENGLAND'S HOLY WAR

By Irene Cooper Willis

THE MIRAGE OF VERSAILLES

By Herman Stegemann

LOCARNO

THE REALITY

ALFRED FABRE-LUCE

Translated from the French by
CONSTANCE VESEY

NEW YORK · ALFRED · A · KNOPF

MCM XXVIII

COPYRIGHT 1928 BY ALFRED · A · KNOPF, INC.

Original Title

LOCARNO SANS RÊVES

Copyright 1927

by Bernard Grasset, Paris

MANUFACTURED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

CONTENTS

Chapter One

HAS NOTHING CHANGED?

Permanent Tendencies and New Instruments 3
Before and After 1914 4

Chapter Two

GENEVA INSUFFICIENT

Unjustifiable Objections 11
The True Balance Sheet 17
Inherent Inconsistencies 18
Defects 25
The New Diplomacy 28
Pacific Revision 30
How to Support the League of Nations 32
The League of Nations in 1914 33
The Future 35

Chapter Three

AGAINST THE UTOPISTS

Democratization of the League 37
Article 10 40
Judgment and Mediation 41
Disarmament 45

61618

Pan-Europa 50
Frontier Rectification 55
Herriot's Policy 59
The Nationalists' Regrets 63
The Versailles Treaty 63
Dismemberment of Germany 65
The Military League of Nations 66
The Rhine 67
Victorious Reconciliation 69
The Marin Policy 70
The True Choice 75

Chapter Four

LOCARNO—A POLICY

Diplomatic Success 78
A Dynamic Agreement 81
Locarno and Geneva 85
Italy 89
The Latin *Bloc* 94
The German Signature 99
The "*Anschluss*"? 103
The Franco-Polish Alliance 110
Franco-German Disarmament 117
The Colonial Problem 119
Responsibility for the War 119
The Solution Does not Exist 122

The Historians' Domain 127
England as a Third 130

Chapter Five

THE DEBTS AS A LEVER

Thoiry 136
The Value of the Rhineland 140
Reparation and Inter-Allied Debts 144
General Cancellation 147
The Lever 149
Responsibility and Solidarity 151
Ratification of the Mellon-Béranger Agreement 154
The Diplomatic Problem 157
What Ratification Would Mean 161
The Real Moral Problem 162
"Political" Protection. The General Problem 169
The Franco-German Problem 171
American Competition 174
Customs Union 176

Chapter Six

"LEARN OR PERISH"

Economy and Policy 179
The New Machiavelli 180
The Rôle of the Government 182
Rapprochement 183
Practical Nationalism in Germany 183

French Society 185
The Reclassification of Values 191
Harmony Between Patriotism and Peace 198
The Demographic Problem 200
What the War Meant 202
A Definite Programme 204
The Spirit of Locarno and Its Application 206
Optimism 208

LOCARNO
THE REALITY

I

HAS NOTHING CHANGED?

"NOTHING very material has changed since the war. Nations, inspired by jealous patriotism, are still on their guard against one another. Mutual interests are all that can lead to the occasional suspension of an undying hostility, which will be disguised under different names, calculated to reassure the peoples." This is what M. Jules Cambon seems to say, with a good deal of reticence and many subtle distinctions, in his little book, *The Diplomat;* and it is what many men of experience, perhaps too much experience, think.

PERMANENT TENDENCIES AND NEW INSTRUMENTS

THEY are right in saying that human nature does not readily change, in reminding us that what is real cannot be transformed into something new, and in calling our attention to the immutable facts which the optimism of each generation disregards. People sometimes forget that feelings as well as facts are the result of experience. They appeal to the interdependence of the European States, as to a primordial fact; but the necessity of being able to visualize the community for which they are working, without barriers of space, tradition, language,

or customs, is another fact of no less importance. Moreover, international solidarity can only become a guiding principle in as far as the bond of union is discovered by each country, through development of its national conscience. Even those who already recognize it must depend on the spontaneous feeling of those about them to propagate their belief.

We make this concession to the prudent guardians of tradition. But we will ask them whether it is not the whole art of policy to find new and diverse methods of satisfying a permanent ideal? There appears to be no doubt that our diplomatic customs, formed under very antiquated influences, prior to the development of industry, chemical warfare, colonialism, in short, of the new world, are out of keeping with the present conditions of international life. That being so, we must bring our political armament up to date; in other words, we must reject the old-fashioned ideas before we can resume even the old conflict.

BEFORE AND AFTER 1914

In endeavouring to sum up the situation after the great European conflict, the onlooker is struck by a few remarkable contrasts with the position in 1914.

The changed view taken of war. Formerly, people thought of it as a short conflict followed by a remunerative victory. The principle of "*revanche*" was generally accepted, even by those who were unwilling to risk de-

feat in its pursuit. They did not see that a reversal of the previous defeat, merged in a fresh catastrophe of far greater magnitude, might appear almost insignificant. In order to form some idea of the change that has taken place since the painful ordeal of 1914, we need only compare the utterances of one politician. In 1913 Poincaré said: "France is not afraid of war." In 1922 he said: "I am afraid of war."

The change in the view taken of the causes of war. Although there may still be considerable differences of opinion as to the responsibility of the different Governments for the outbreak of the great war, all thoughtful minded men agree that no one Government was solely responsible. Anyhow, on the side of the Allies (only to quote statesmen who are specially interested in incriminating the Central Empires), M. Poincaré and Lord Grey have very clearly admitted that, at the beginning of July 1914, none of the Great Powers wished to provoke a general conflict.[1] War is no longer regarded merely as the price of attempts by one State to control others, but also as a risk naturally attached to certain political conditions, such as the existence of groups of rival alliances, competitive armaments, etc. . . .

The change in the methods of warfare. Instruments are employed which retain their value in peace time, for instance, propaganda, and, up to a certain point,

[1] *Twenty-five Years.* Grey. *Les responsabilités de la Guerre.* (Foreign Affairs, October 1925.) Poincaré.

blockade. Military combat is only an episode, a transitory form taken by a long struggle whose outcome perhaps does not, after all, depend upon it. But the forms of collaboration it suggests have a permanent value. The League of Nations prolongs the interallied Conferences, for ends which gradually become different, having originally borrowed its personnel and organization from them.

The changed conception of sovereignty. Ever since the conclusion of the armistice, the fluctuations in the exchange have shown us that we no longer have entire control of our policy. We know now that concessions necessary for the preservation of peace are not always more painful than those necessitated by the play of the war alliances. An insurance premium to the enemy; a compensation premium to her allies; these are France's alternatives.

The change in the part played by economic factors. The war was not due to economic difficulties, as is widely believed, but it drew attention to them. The interdependence so much talked of nowadays existed before 1914, only, as it had gradually increased during a period of peace, it had to be broken off in order to be felt. In trying to carry the principle of nationalities to its logical conclusions, the authors of the Versailles Treaty showed that it had become insufficient. What recriminations there were, even in the case of those who ought to have been satisfied! In a complicated civiliza-

tion, political freedom of choice no longer suffices for happiness, and the aim of policy itself is to secure the elements of prosperity to all, which formerly seemed their birthright.

A change in the force and tendency of public opinion. The public are no longer satisfied with the old "diplomatic success," if this involves the risk of war. They are on the alert and suspicious, and object to secret negotiations. They refuse to rely, as in the past, simply on the wisdom of their leaders, and wish them to be controlled by a superior organism, specially representing the interests of peace. The hypocrisy of the diplomats, as far back as during the last two years before the war, was the best possible testimony to what the people felt. The Great Powers dared not quarrel openly; they concealed their differences beneath those they had instigated and intensified between the little Balkan nations. In future, bellicose intentions must be still better disguised.

A change in the conditions on which the balance of power depends. Even setting aside these moral factors, it would be evident that the elements which formerly maintained the balance of power in Europe have ceased to exist. Before 1914, peace could be preserved indefinitely by skilfully manipulating the scales. France had done this very well for forty years. Her moderation had given the German claims the appearance of menaces to the European order which called for a reply

from all the Powers, in the general interest. Not only that, but each forcible intervention on the part of Germany involved a system of defence capable of neutralizing it. This game might still have been played in 1914 if we had then had a Government in power with more discernment and patience. The "dead point" the German initiative overstepped might have been regained, either by temporising until 1917 (that is to say, until the Russian military programme had been carried out in full), or by adopting a frankly conciliatory and "Western" attitude, and thereby securing a public promise of English co-operation from 1914 onwards. But we accepted the hypothesis of an immediate conflict from the outset of the crisis, in our conversations with St. Petersburg, and Germany might well believe that England would not support this policy of Balkan action. She risked intimidation, because she thought that the balance of power was upset. It was only during the war that the situation became clear. Today, how can we establish a new diplomatic balance of power surrounding a Franco-German opposition? How can the former "encirclement" be reconstituted? By relying on Poland? Yes, if she had not been set up in opposition to Russia. Since the territorial partition of 1919–1920, there has been too much risk of our Eastern "counter-poise" being annulled in the East itself. As to the small Central European States, they have to consider their national minorities, and find out where they stand with

regard to Russia and Italy. If we wanted to reunite them against Germany alone, we should have to insure them against other dangers which are not our own. Moreover, our dangers too have changed. Since the restoration of Alsace-Lorraine, and the reversal of the fortunes of war, France has become more industrial; there are fewer independent incomes, consequently there are fresh requirements, fresh liabilities, and fresh enmities. Another neighbouring State seems to be taking up the torch of German Imperialism. In short, many forces must be taken into account which were not thrown into the scales before 1914; non-European, financial, and social forces. The political balance of power on the continent is now merely a question of playing a game.

These changes call for new instruments.

II

GENEVA INSUFFICIENT

To what extent has the League of Nations responded to the expectations of the day?

Before answering this question, we must define the true character of the institution, for it is still very generally judged in relation to Utopian schemes which, it is true, were proclaimed abroad by some of its promoters and enthusiasts, but from which it is very largely absolved, after several years of practical experience. Let the facts reply to the objections made to it.

UNJUSTIFIABLE OBJECTIONS

Can *it be described as a Parliament where business begins and ends in talk?* Ever since the elaboration of the Covenant, as the experts who took part in it have had reason to testify, the Council has been considered the controlling power. The Assembly has discussed theoretical prerogatives, which, as a matter of fact, are limited by its size, its slow procedure, and the rare occasions on which it meets. It is obliged to leave the Council to decide urgent questions, in other words, matters of vital importance, consequently it cannot subsequently disavow the decision. The only opposition it can make is to aggressors who are foolish enough to

choose the month of September for their action. During the rest of the year they would only have to reckon with the Council. In short, the League of Nations is an oligarchy, based on a democracy to which it is not subordinate. Its great strength, no doubt, lies in its influence on public opinion, and this influence is of most importance in the Parliamentary States. Consequently it is naturally in sympathy with them, but it has not retained the usual defects of their organization. Although the Council may be inspired by public opinion to consult the Assembly, as in the happy instance of the Corfu affair, it can also ignore a control which has never been sanctioned by any real responsibility, and which is becoming more and more shadowy in proportion to the degree in which the different Governments take the League more seriously. In reality, the tendency of the Governments is to replace the idealists they first sent as delegates by expert representatives of their personal interests, and the strength of the impetus given by collective enthusiasm is being proportionately reduced. In September 1926, the discussion by the Assembly of the report on the activities of the Council was insignificant.[1] This growing predominance of the executive power even involves some renunciation of their sovereignty on the part of the small States, some of whom can only be temporary members of the Council, whilst

[1] See M. William Martin's interesting articles on this subject in the *Journal de Genève.*

others can only become permanent members by the roundabout and uncertain way of re-election, which they must merit.

Is it a chimerical attempt to transform international life solely by means of an institution? This is an argument often taken up by those of the League's friends who are at the same time its most insidious foes. They aspire to safeguard the enterprise by entrenching it in hygienic and moral work. It appears to us that the services it has already rendered entitle it to aim higher, without on that account making any claim to create *ex nihilo*. Its rôle is to afford the forces of peace, which were powerless in 1914, in spite of their numerical superiority, the means of stimulating and controlling the actions of their Governments.

As a stimulant, the League inspires its members with a new conception of honour, merely by its language (others will say by its phraseology,—what does it matter!) Its criterion is the acceptance of arbitration instead of recourse to war. It also inspires a new conception of interest, one which makes anxiety for peace coincide with the desire for power. The pacific States are inclined to emphasize their moderation, in order to secure the support of the League in case of war. Inversely, as M. Chaumie truly said in an article in *l'Europe Nouvelle*, the warlike States, being obliged to countenance the League at first, in order the better to

dissimulate their designs, mislead their public opinion by this, and weaken its future cohesion. A premium is thus placed on innocence, and hypocrisy is penalized. In short, the internal mechanism of the League makes disinterestedness profitable. (In 1926, the Swedish representative gained fresh prestige by offering to resign. In 1923, after the forcible occupation of Corfu, the Italians were not re-elected to the chairmanship of Committees.)

As regards control, the continuity of the League of Nations regulates the working of Constitutions, by acting as a check on the sudden changes to which democracy is too prone, by subtly limiting the prerogatives of the Governments in power, and finally by doing away with the evils of secret diplomacy. On this last point, we cannot associate ourselves with the opinion expressed by M. Jules Cambon in the little book to which we have already referred. According to him, it was only the *preparation* which was kept secret under the old system, the *decision* being always taken after a public debate. That was certainly the theory, but the statesmen did their best to pervert it *by making the preparation decisive.* It was submitted to the public, but only when they had been left no choice. The Franco-Russian military convention, for instance, was never discussed until the 1st of August 1914, and how could it have been discussed on that day, when to repudiate it would have meant dishonour? Moreover, in any cir-

cumstances it would have been difficult to form an opinion on the subject, for the various *casus foederis* which were to bring the alliances into play were formulated in terms that were very vague, and susceptible of different interpretations, according to the personalities in power. Today, the question of whether intervention is justified is no longer left to the exclusive judgment of the Government interested, and the League of Nations furnishes the information in full which was formerly only given in part.

Whilst thus eliminating the disadvantages of the old diplomacy, the League of Nations still preserves its essential advantages. It even inclines to re-create that body of first class intermediaries, long familiar with international questions, and between whom common customs or friendships form a bond of union, which constituted the strength of the monarchies. The Covenant is the charter of a new and great permanent Alliance, distinguished from the offensive alliances by the absence of any intention of conquest, and even from the former defensive alliances, in that anxiety for peace predominates over the desire for victory. The Council carries on the European Concert, but in a different atmosphere, for the existence of a code, and of a body of precedent, makes the position of the delegates very different to what it was formerly. The League adheres to principles, like the Holy Alliance, but differs from it in two essential particulars. On the

one hand, its principles are fairly reconcilable with various constitutional forms, and its duration is consequently no longer limited to that of a system of government; on the other hand its organization insures continuity and regularity in international co-operation. A permanent Secretariat co-ordinates and prepares the work to be done by the delegates, and preliminary or supplementary discussion of the expediency of each Council meeting is avoided by the fact of the meetings taking place at fixed intervals.

Is it a dangerous speculation on the chances of Pacifism increasing? No, not that alone, for even if, when the danger arose, the League could not insure the triumph of the humanitarian over the bellicose forces, it could still intimidate the latter by obliging them to measure the exact extent of the conflict. For instance, in a situation similar to that of 1914, if the Council were strong enough to compel the parties to discuss the position frankly, England could not persist in maintaining her equivocal attitude, and Germany could not cherish any illusions as to her final decision. To eliminate the influence of force altogether from international relations is the ideal; to be sparing of its use is a long step towards the attainment of that ideal. But the League of Nations can always be doing something to diminish the friction between the rival nations. On the one hand, it can set limits to the pressure of the dominant Powers; on the other, it can give that pres-

sure an anonymous character and find some pretext for it, or even represent it as being for some reason of general interest which would render submission to it less humiliating.

THE TRUE BALANCE SHEET

FINALLY, to complete this defence of the League, we may remark that its balance sheet is too often falsified by ignoring some of its essential elements, or by introducing foreign elements into it. The mistakes due to the survival of out-of-date methods in its midst must be expunged from its liabilities. For instance, the failure of March 1926, due to an unsuccessful attempt to settle the question of reforming the Council by an isolated Anglo-French discussion, and simply as a matter of expediency, without considering the general interest of the League, without having taken pains to ascertain the opinion of the other Powers, and having compromised their freedom to negotiate beforehand by secret commitments, thus losing the advantages of the Geneva atmosphere. Against this, we must put down to its credit all the results of its indirect action, giving the first place to the Dawes scheme, which was inspired by the same principles as those responsible for the rehabilitation of Austria and Hungary by the League. In many of the spheres which seem to have evaded its control, the successes achieved must be associated with the spirit, the methods, and the new international law

the League has broadcast throughout the world, and this indirect action most fortunately reduces the practical import of some regrettable abstentions; that of the United States, for instance. In reality, if they had ratified the Versailles Treaty, the extent of their subordination to the competence of the League would have been trifling, owing to the incorporation of the Monroe Doctrine in the text of the Covenant, and their eventual obligation to intervene in the affairs of Europe would have been limited by the Wilson interpretation of Article 10.[1] Inversely, their present independence probably would not prevent their accepting the verdict of the League as to the aggressor, and refusing to give the guilty State either economic or financial assistance.

INHERENT INCONSISTENCIES

Having pleaded the cause of the League, we must now call attention to the inconsistencies which might be its destruction, if care were not taken to guard against them. Statesmen are fond of appealing to their devotion to the League, as though this generous enthusiasm expressed a distinct policy. By personifying the institution they avoid defining it, but their unanimous agreement is sufficient to warn us that the idea on which they agree is very vague. In reality, when analysed, the text of the Covenant reveals conflicting conceptions which

[1] In 1919, President Wilson admitted in the American Senate that, in the last resort, each State was the judge of aggressions.

it claims to reconcile, but whose mutual inconsistency is the very essence of the League of Nations. We will endeavour to follow the civil war between these ideas.

Inconsistency between the principles of the League of Nations and its geographical scope. We will say nothing about the United States, as they have refused to accept the position offered to them in the League, which was nevertheless a very special position. Even amongst the States which are members, Great Britain's long resistance to all schemes for a general organization of security showed the difficulty every large non-European Power has in unreservedly recognizing the present League of Nations.

Several reasons may be given for this.

The ambiguous position in which the Dominions are placed by being on an equality with Great Britain in the Assembly, whilst, in the Empire, they are bound to the mother country by a tie of subordination, slight though it may be.

The difficulty in subjecting peoples to the same jurisdiction, who have neither a common intellectual inheritance, mutual regard for one another and tradition of equality, nor material forces which can be balanced against one another.

The uneven and imperfect development of the law. Outside Europe, the great causes of international conflict do not come within the province of international legislation, and they can consequently be dealt with

independently of the League of Nations. The problems of immigration and distribution of raw material, in particular, which dominate the relations between America and Asia, are still exclusively regulated by the laws of the countries concerned. The States in those regions are therefore deterred from joining the League, either by fear that it may declare itself incompetent to deal with the questions that interest them, and thus unable to guarantee their security, or, inversely, by fear that it may extend its competence and interfere in their domestic affairs.

To measure the repercussions of these difficulties, it is only necessary to consider the history of the League. No practical organization of security has been devised that would be absolutely effective. Europe has an overwhelming majority in the Council. Asiatic affairs are still settled by the old methods of arbitrary intervention. North America is not a member. South America has a right to intervene in European affairs which is not really reciprocal, and from which Europe, moreover, inclines to emancipate herself (as shown by the elimination of Brazil; Pan-European negotiations corresponding to Pan-American negotiations). The essentially European character of the institution has been repeatedly attested in one way or another, whether by the projected Treaty of Mutual Assistance, which organized military assistance on a strictly intra-continental basis, or by the defeat of the Geneva Protocol,

which strikingly demonstrated it. We must restrict it still further, and speak, not of "geographical" but of "moral" Europe. As a matter of fact, a veritable war of propaganda is being carried on between the Soviets and the League of Nations, and, on the rest of the continent, the power of the League varies according to the States or regions, from the two-fold point of view of the efficacy of sanctions and authority of arbitration. Certain countries on the coast, which have no navies of any importance, are the natural victims of the sanction most easy to apply—blockade. It may be safely prophesied that unless they can succeed in getting one of the Great Powers on their side, they will never be able to rebel against the decisions of the Council. Other States, following Russia's example, are already living in the isolation and misery that might be inflicted on them by international sanctions; and for this very reason they are less vulnerable. In the Balkans, it will not always be easy to decide who is the aggressor, on account of the mixed populations, the nervousness that prevails in the disputed territories, and lack of the natural barriers or neutralized zones which would make an attack from the west obvious. On the other hand, in default of a public opinion amenable to legal considerations, it would be difficult to impose the sentences there except by force. In some of the new units created in 1919, where several races and several traditions have been mixed indiscriminately, there is always the

fear of their breaking up spontaneously, in case of a crisis, leaving the League of Nations irresolute and powerless in the face of several Governments; and also a fear of partisan movements (as in the Korfanty precedent), which might create international complications without necessarily involving any responsibility on the part of the Central Government. Finally, countries under a dictatorship, like Spain and Italy, are inclined, according to some interpretations, to evade the conditions fixed for admission to the League by Article 1 of the Covenant.

In short, the League of Nations is made for civilized, cultivated, democratic States, conscious of universal solidarity. Now there are not many such in the world.

Inconsistency between the universal character of the League and the regional ententes it authorizes. The former defensive alliances, which are still permitted by the Covenant under certain conditions, and may come into play in case of the Council being divided, in reality determine spheres of influence which restrict the liberty of the arbiters, the result being that compromises are reached in accordance with considerations other than those of justice and equity. The Locarno delegates stipulated that direct intervention on the part of the guarantors of the Rhineland Treaty, prior to its discussion by the Council, should automatically debar them from taking part in the discussion. If this idea is

pursued to its logical conclusion, ought not the Allies, who have biassed the guarantors' choice of a camp by entering into a one-sided undertaking beforehand, to be equally excluded from the discussion?

Inconsistency between justice and the treaties. It is true, that "justice without treaties is revolution," as Count Srzynski said at Geneva, but it is also true that treaties without justice are forcible measures. Now there is unfortunately no doubt that the settlement after the Great War was based on debatable principles, which vary according to circumstances and are sometimes inconsistent; that it was imposed in spite of the official reservations made by the conquered nations, and that the latter can therefore argue their moral right to a revision of all the points to which they did not voluntarily agree.

Inconsistency between the League of Nations as the executive of the victors, and the League of Nations as a medium of conciliation. Logically, its institution should either have been delayed, after the execution of the Treaty, or Germany should have been invited to join the League at once, in order to avoid compromising it. The necessity of complying with the contradictory requirements of its laws and its composition, obliged the Geneva organization to announce as a just decision, with regard to the Silesian frontiers, one reached under the sole influence of the victors. The divisions between the Allies, and Germany's admission

to the League, have led to a new spirit, which makes such a decision inconceivable in future, but does not cancel it. Similarly, the prohibition, at Locarno, under the patronage of the League of Nations, of any violation of the Rhineland zone without its formal authority, was a retrospective condemnation of the occupation of the Ruhr, towards which it had shown indifference. The dissatisfied parties have thus been furnished with arguments, but have not been satisfied.

Inconsistency between the absolute interdiction of war, and the imperfect organization of pacific methods of settling disputes. The Covenant left peace of a sort, but, to set against that, it authorized war, on condition that it be delayed for three months, and the subjects of dispute be referred to the League. This necessary parallel between the elimination of force and the development of conciliation was upset at Locarno. Today the terms of the famous trilogy, "Security, arbitration, disarmament" originated by M. Herriot and accepted by Herr Luther, are unequally weighted. Theoretically, there is now perfect security in Western Europe, as war is out of the question in any case, but the possibility of a solution being reached by arbitration in any case, has not been insured. Article 3 of the Rhineland Treaty provides that non-justiciable disputes shall be referred to a Committee of Conciliation, from whose decision an appeal may be made to the Council of the League; but if the latter is divided, it cannot

enforce any decision, according to the provisions of Article 15 of the Covenant. For lack of rules, fixed in advance, or of the higher Court of Arbitration provided for by the Geneva Protocol, the most critical disputes are consequently likely to end in a deadlock.

Inconsistency between the spirit of the League and some of its methods. In order to preserve peace, it threatens war. If the calculation is successful it fulfils its mission, but if it fails, the States which have insured victory, by carrying out an international mandate, will certainly demand rewards, and how is it possible to imagine their being measured with strict justice? Once force is put into operation, it escapes the law of justice, and turns against it. A defensive war may end in being a war of aggression.

THE DEFECTS

THESE inconsistencies are the real explanation of the defects still remaining in the present organization of security; they can only disappear when it is established on a logical basis. This is why the Geneva Protocol was a splendid criticism of the Covenant, without effecting any improvement in it. It is true that it has been said, and repeated every day, that the Locarno agreements were at least a partial application of the principles propounded in September 1924, reduced in extent, but retaining their full sense. This is only a legal fiction. The Locarno agreements did certainly make strict

provision against the case of war which is least probable. They eliminated the danger *de jure* which is already eliminated *de facto:* the danger of France and Germany attacking one another directly;[1] but these two Powers are left the easiest, the most attractive, and the most traditional means of going to war—the indirect method of alliances. In fact, in a conflict in Eastern Europe over which the Geneva Council might be divided, they would be at liberty to intervene at will. Only against the aggressor, according to Article 2 of the Rhineland Treaty. But what does this reservation mean, seeing that in default of an automatic criterion, a unanimous decision of the Council is the only means of determining the aggressor? This disagreement with regard to the eastern frontiers was bound to lead to the failure of all projects of general territorial security. In fact, rousing the opposition of an unsatisfied Germany, it would also involve that of a passive England, inclined to limit her risks. An imperfect organization of security is, and had necessarily to be, the price paid for the creation of the Danzig Corridor and the partition of Upper Silesia. As long as the territorial distribution in those regions is not definitely accepted by both sides, it will be impossible to relieve the Council

[1] In reality, the Rhine neither leads to the territories Germany claims, nor is it the adversaries' least line of resistance. And is it to be supposed that a surprise attack would be attempted exactly in the direction and form that everyone expects?

of the rule of unanimity, whether by establishing the higher Court of Arbitration of the Protocol, or by substituting a suspensory veto for the present absolute veto, as some suggest.

Let us, however, imagine for a moment that, in spite of these obstacles, the Geneva Protocol had been ratified. Suppose that, carried away by a wave of idealism, or yielding to considerations of expediency, the Governments had upheld the original attitude of their delegates towards it. Transgressions would then have simply been dealt with by applying sanctions. Of what use are Byzantine discussions on the value of the council's recommendation of this or that project? It is always a case of a moral obligation, which leaves the Parliaments free to decide in the end how far their honour is pledged.[1] Now the sense of honour may be more or less keen according to the more or less equitable character of the *status quo* in question, according to the trend of public opinion in Europe or even according to the geographical distance. In any case, policy may interfere with the execution of the

[1] In 1922, M. Poincaré's Government replied to a proposed interpretation of Article 10, submitted by Canada, that ratification of that Article could not invest the Governments with permanent powers, and that the obligation incurred must be discharged "in accordance with the constitutional laws of each State." Subsequently, a proposed resolution, which was only defeated by the Persian vote, stated that the opinion of the Council was only "an invitation of the utmost importance," and that the Constitutional Powers remained judges of whether the situation arose.

decision. For instance, in an eastern dispute, where the law may be doubtful, or where Great Britain might not consider her vital interests at stake, her delegate, who would probably prevent a unanimous designation of the aggressor under the Locarno régime, would have taken advantage of the special position of the United Kingdom—her reduced army and domestic difficulties —to limit the extent of her help under the Geneva régime. We are making no radical distinction between the various security projects. Our present criticism applies to them all, in different ways.

THE NEW DIPLOMACY

THE truth is that, through the international work of the last few years, war has lost some of its avenues of approach. The pretexts—frontier or diplomatic incidents, etc.—which formerly cloaked the underlying causes of conflicts, will have difficulty in evading the proffered conciliation. The forces working for war must be exposed to the judgment of public opinion in all their nakedness. They will, moreover, have to choose between the disadvantages of delay and those of possible international punishment, a choice of disadvantages which somewhat detracts from the temptations to aggression. They must submit to the yoke of an alliance which will naturally be durable, because it coincides with the one permanent interest of the nations—peace—and is moreover legally unimpeachable, as far as the majority

of the parties to it are concerned.[1] It has thus become more difficult to cheat in the diplomatic game, but not impossible. We must even anticipate that new methods, adapted to the rules of the League of Nations, will be employed by the Imperialist Governments—wars of propaganda, efforts to split the Council, provocation to the opposite side to attack, by the employment of measures outside international jurisdiction. They will try to take advantage of the timidity shown in drafting the Covenant, which, inspired by Bryan and Smuts, does not prohibit war, but merely proposes delaying it, and has doubled the practical passive obligations (for which the word "engagements" is used) by adding hypothetical active obligations (there is no longer any question of more than "seeing to the means" etc.). They will remember that Article 10 only protects territorial integrity against "external" aggression, and that the Rhineland Treaty itself has left it to the doubtful unanimity of the Council to deal with refusals to carry out obligations, private provocation, and preparations for war. They will try to set criteria of aggression against one another which are equally legitimate, and from which contrary assumptions might be drawn, such as omission to act in accordance with the rules of the Covenant, or violation of the frontiers fixed by the

[1] The Locarno agreements can only be denounced by a two-thirds majority, of which there is practically no risk until world peace is definitely assured.

Rhineland Treaty. Above all, they will cling desperately to the clause providing for unanimity, which is not an obstacle in a given atmosphere of collaboration, as the history of the League shows, but which, at a time when there was distrust in the air, would be turned to account by the "conservatives" to try to prevent any modification of the *status quo* by agreement, and by the "revisionists" to prevent any punishment of attempts to modify it by force, thus, in both cases, working against peace. Is this perverted imagination or premature pessimism? No. The last mentioned use of the veto has already been provided for in the Russo-German and Italo-Spanish treaties signed in 1926, which describe the League of Nations as a coalition, and abstention from it as neutrality.

PACIFIC REVISION

Nevertheless, many amiable Pacifists complacently hold out hope of pacific revision by mutual consent as an alternative to the dangers of crystallization or violence. Let there be no mistake as to the meaning of the words. *Pacific revision* is possible, but in the present state of feeling, it is extremely likely that nothing but a previous demonstration of force would induce the defendants to *consent* to revision, or at the most the knowledge that it would spare them forcible measures. The legal sense of Article 19 is that the only frontiers admitting of alteration are those which have ceased to

satisfy the interested party, and of Article 15, that the only frontiers guaranteed are those which please all parties.[1] In practice, how would the question be put? The legal efficacy of Article 19, said Herr Stresemann immediately after the Locarno Conference, is doubtful, but its moral efficacy is indisputable. These words, coming from a practical statesman, enable us to imagine the game that Germany, for instance, might play. She would first wait until definite local difficulties had arisen in the contested territories. These accumulated difficulties, magnified and brought before the League of Nations as a whole by her, after thorough preparation by the Press, would probably be made the subject of a discussion which would be inconclusive. But after two or three repetitions of this ceremony, Germany would have succeeded in convincing a good many members of the League that the choice was solely between war and revision. From that moment, all the pacifists would incline to the latter alternative, and would combine to carry it into effect or remain passive. A campaign might thus be carried on which would hold over the State concerned the menace of divided opinion within the League, in case of war, and would incline it to yield, in order to avoid defeat. The first step would be to secure a majority vote of the Assem-

[1] In reality, this article enables the States which desire to remain neutral, to evade their obligations as guarantors by preventing any designation of the aggressor.

bly in support of a resolution recommending a revision of the frontiers, in accordance with Article 19. The moral obligation to revise them, created by this vote, would obviously influence the Council in forming an opinion with regard to all ulterior conflicts arising from the same cause. If the defendant State did not fall in with the suggestion that the frontiers should be revised, could the League of Nations subsequently condemn aggression on the part of the claimant State, having previously established its justification? The fact of there being a majority in the Assembly in favour of revision would make it at least doubtful whether the aggressor would be condemned by a majority in the Council. Application to each of the authorities in turn would therefore be the "revisionist" aggressor's best means of securing neutrality and help, under the present conditions of diplomacy, and the conflict which would ensue would be a conflict between two articles of the Covenant and two conceptions of justice, as well as between two members of the League of Nations.

HOW TO SUPPORT THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

Has our opinion changed since the day when, in devoting the last chapter of *The Limitations of Victory* (*La Victoire*) to the League of Nations, we spoke of it as "a living answer to the mistakes of 1914"? Not in any way—we are still strong partisans of the institu-

tion—for, as far back as two years ago, we pointed out the conditions indispensable to its success. The first, in our opinion, was a Franco-German condition—a *rapprochement* between the two Governments, which is inconceivable without spiritual reconciliation, itself inconceivable without revising the past. Now although the League of Nations has been happily inaugurated and developed, this method of supporting it has not yet been effectively applied. A brief survey of what occurred before the war will illustrate the dangers of the omission.

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS IN 1914

It is often said that the League of Nations would have prevented the war. We agree, but we must first define the meaning of this assertion. If the League is merely launched suddenly into the midst of the quarrels of 1914, by a retrospective hypothesis, it means nothing at all. Instead of saying shortly: "War broke out because there was no League of Nations," we must be explicit, and say: "War broke out because a League of Nations was inconceivable at that time." The fact is that the atmosphere might have supplemented the institution to a certain extent, but it did not exist. Great works of international justice were doomed to failure, at a time when one of the most powerful countries in Europe—Russia—could ignore its public opinion, and when another country—Austria-Hungary—refused to admit the principle of protection of minorities, which

has become fundamental in the constitution of the League of Nations. Moreover, how could a Europe be personified which was divided into two antagonistic camps? Does not the organized League turn pale, even now, when the unilateral alliances it tolerates seem to resume something of their former vigour? In 1914, each of the Great Powers, supported by its satellites, could hope to hold the rest of the world in check, and the League of Nations would only have grouped its natural enemies against each of them. To imagine its sovereignty, at the beginning of the twentieth century, we should have to assume, on the one hand, that it was constituted before the formation of the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente, or that it had absorbed these groups; on the other, that it had sufficiently influenced the constitutions and political customs of Europe to adapt them to its essential principles. A very liberal hypothesis. And yet, unless we assume one or other, we must admit that, whenever a crisis occurred, the international Areopagus would have been divided in accordance with the alliances. Moreover, the underlying causes of the war were so involved, during the last decade of peace, that an impartial tribunal could only have discovered them successively in one or other camp. Had it been instituted at the beginning of 1914, it would have begun by condemning Austria-Hungary, but, if it had been created a few years earlier, the latter would have laid the Pan-Slav propaganda before

the tribunal, as being a menace both to her security and to peace. Finally, in considering the immediate causes of the war at the eleventh hour, in the absence of a definite criterion of aggression, it would have condemned, at one and the same time, the Central Empires for giving diplomatic provocation, and Russia for giving military provocation. The real criterion could only have been determined after a long work of intellectual and moral *rapprochement*, and this was not imperatively demanded by public opinion, which did not foresee either the magnitude, the length, or the consequences of a world war.

THE FUTURE

This work can and must be pursued now. In our eyes, the great value of the promises recently exchanged is that they have marked its point of departure. If the signatories were to attach decisive intrinsic value to the new system of security they have established, if they were to yield to the tendency to rest on their concessions, which was the first reaction following the agreement, if they were to lose sight of the prospect they have opened up, their work would not answer to the peoples' hopes for long. Those who boast of the documents that have been signed, and at the same time reject the idea of continued collaboration, must be told frankly that they have only facilitated a step in the direction of a dangerous revival, and given the enemy

they perpetuate the means of establishing a better ratio of forces for a future war by renouncing war for the present. On the day when the vanquished nations might think that the hour had come, the pretexts would again be ready in the East for the time-honoured Rhine conflict; a German Nationalist Government might again oblige us to choose between peace and honour; A French Nationalist Government might again choose the opportune moment for a war officially described as defensive. This is not an empty hypothesis for those who, like ourselves, have learned from history that France's security has chiefly been menaced in the past by her unconscious enemies in France itself. . . .

Having shown all the weaknesses of an organization of peace which is not based on an adequate substructure of Franco-German reconciliation, we propose to indicate the remedies which we think can still be applied; but let us first reply to those who deal with the problem on another plane, and maintain that the true means of guaranteeing peace can be found either by generally reforming the League of Nations, or by dispensing with it or acting in opposition to it.

III

AGAINST THE UTOPISTS

MANY generous minded persons, having recognized the justice of the criticisms directed against the League of Nations, do not suggest abolishing it, on the strength of those criticisms; on the contrary, they recommend putting new life into the institution, and organizing peace more thoroughly.

DEMOCRATIZATION OF THE LEAGUE

THOSE who believe chiefly in the influence of institutions, would like to see the League of Nations first democratized. In particular, they suggest that the permanent seats on the Council should either be abolished or their number indefinitely increased. To adopt the latter suggestion would be to add incalculably to the difficulty in reaching a unanimous decision, and consequently to the difficulty in acting. To resort to the former would be to risk entrusting the gravest decisions to representatives of Powers who would not be able to ensure their execution. Moreover, would it rest there? Would not the force acquired by the ball, if once set rolling, lead to the perpetual and unrestricted evolution which alone represents pure and unadulterated democracy? In other words, would the Great Powers be

always re-elected, thus recovering the permanence which they would legally have renounced? To transform some members of the Council into mandatories of unrepresented Powers, or compel others to purchase their natural prerogatives, would be to multiply the intrigues and coalitions, to organize a return to practices which have been universally condemned, above all by the pacifists. We may add that the Great Powers threatened with an electoral defeat, might consider it consistent with their dignity to announce the possibility of their withdrawal, thus leaving the Society, in the end, either materially weakened by their absence, or morally prejudiced through having yielded to their coercion. It would consequently be useless to ignore the connection between the strength of the guarantors and the efficacy of the guarantee, between the probability of sanctions and the authority of the arbiters. As the Great Powers will have to do the work, they ought also to have the credit of it. Undoubtedly the original composition of the Council was arbitrary, but we think there is no reason to be ashamed of that. The action would probably never have been questioned if the Great Powers had justified their privileges by making a bold pacific move in the beginning. In practice, it has been useful, for, in fixing certain rules, the founders of the League have saved it from dangerous discussions which might have wrecked it, and the events of 1926 even give reason for regret that they did not prescribe more, in ad-

vance. Moreover, the addition of new elected members now assures a very suitable representation of the smaller Powers; in any case, the adoption of a standard by which to recruit all the members of the Council, would not meet the requirements of ideal justice, for the relative importance of States cannot be measured in terms of population.

The appointment of delegates has also been criticised; it has been said that they ought to be direct representatives of the Parliaments, not of the Governments. But here again, if it is to be a question of principle, why not go farther? No minority ought to be deprived of the right to express its opinion. It would be necessary to establish a system of proportional representation, which would make the Parliament of Nations an immense assembly, both unmanageable and sterile. In reality, the present representation is stable and authentic enough, without being cumbersome. The delegates appointed by the Governments can be changed according to the electoral tendencies shown and the changes in the Parliamentary majorities, but it is not desirable that they should be changed too often. Moreover, is it quite certain that even a unique elected representative would be more truly representative of the nation than a Government delegate? Wilson had admitted the idea of this compromise. In our opinion he would, on the contrary, run the risk of appearing more like the representative of a Party.

Other extremists, less concerned about the composition of the Council than about the programme of the League, would like to reinforce the engagements entered into by the signatories of the Covenant, from the triple point of view of guaranteeing territorial integrity, adopting compulsory arbitration, and reducing armaments.

ARTICLE 10

As to the first, they recommend a strict interpretation of Article 10, which would bind all the Powers to maintain the *status quo*, and would protect it by a system under which not only economic and financial, but also military sanction would be automatic. This scheme is deliberately opposed to the spontaneous evolution of public opinion. In fact, as we have seen, the interpretation almost unanimously given to Article 10 by the nations represented at Geneva, is very restricted. Indeed, any other interpretation would be very dangerous. The object of the work done at Geneva is to translate the community of interests now existing between the nations into law. Formulas which go beyond the reality of this solidarity would provoke legitimate reactions, and only delay the attainment of the object in view. Would anyone venture to maintain, for instance, that in the course of the last few years, instead of refraining, as it did, from interfering in the affairs of Armenia, Georgia, and Persia, the Council ought to have

organized military intervention on behalf of those States? If French soldiers had been despatched to a distant field of operations to defend a cause imperfectly understood, in which the national interests were not directly involved, the country would have felt that there is an opposition between pacifism and peace.

JUDGMENT AND MEDIATION

Nor do we regret the choice made by the Locarno delegates, in attaching more importance to political mediation than to the legal possibilities contained in Article 32 of the Statute of the Permanent Court of International Justice. Here again it is essential not to believe that progress which has still to be made is retrospectively possible or even desirable. Nothing is gained by forcing the evolution of international law; the names change, but the realities remain. A decision to generalize the clauses making arbitration obligatory would encourage the nations to multiply their reservations. Again, if all disputes were to be submitted to a tribunal, they would be carried on within it. How is it possible to prevent judges from being influenced by their particular training, no matter how high-minded they may be? No doubt, international justice has been equipped with fresh and

[1] For a more detailed study of these questions, we refer the reader to the remarkable works by M. Politis—his book *La Justice Internationale* (Alcan), and his articles in the *Revue de Paris*, *Foreign Affairs*, etc.

valuable guarantees since the war. Not only interested States, but any member of the League may now bring a cause before the Hague Tribunal. It decides its own competence, which the parties formerly limited at will. But it still has weak points. Owing to the defects of international law, the Court may be powerless to deal with essential cases. Its Statute prohibits it from giving an equitable verdict, except with the consent of the litigants. The right of the Assembly to appoint judges of the same nationality as the parties, who, in practice, never dissent from them, the frequent selection of judges by agreement between the Governments, and the possibility accorded to the minority to express its opinion publicly, are all damaging to the prestige of the Court. These defects in the machinery tend to reduce it to the position of a political assemblage, whose interpretations of the law have never had more weight than that of a distinguished opinion. The division of votes given by the arbitrators at the Hague has been known to correspond exactly with the representation of the continents in the Court. Would a verdict of this kind be felt a just settlement of a dispute in which the law did not seem clear, which involved one of those great moral or vital questions on which there are no specialists, and over which the most cultivated opinion in Europe might disagree, a verdict pronounced by a feeble majority in opposition to the opinion of a minority with a good deal of justice on their side? Would it not then be easy for the re-

actionaries to denounce the resort to international reason, as being tantamount to staking the fortunes of the nation on a throw of the dice? It is always possible to make disputes on points on law appear disputes on points of fact; it is natural that the parties should prefer to entrust grave questions to a political Areopagus, and it is inevitable that sympathies, interests, and the desire or objection to intervene should play their part in it.

That will certainly be the case in the Council of the League of Nations for some years to come. The interested Powers will set intrigues on foot; the disinterested Powers will be chiefly anxious to avoid war, and, with that object in view, they will favour compromise, even if justice weighs down the scales on one side. Consideration will be shown for the *amour-propre* of the interested parties, in order to expedite compromises. There will be a tendency to safeguard the League, a desire to guard against important secessions, against making any recommendation to apply sanctions which might not be acted upon, or against applying sanctions which might be ineffectual, for fear of endangering its existence. The machinery will not be too severely tested, lest it should break down. A premium will thus be given to the most powerful or most menacing State; it will be paid for its adhesion. The League will only be able to risk pronouncing absolutely just decisions later on, if its authority is fortified by tradition, and if the close fusion be-

tween its members, for which it speaks in advance, becomes a reality.

Certain jurists, endeavouring to combine the advantages of elasticity and impartiality in one form of procedure, have proposed to "depoliticize" mediation, that is to say, entrust it to independent mediators, who would not represent the political Powers.[1] "Depoliticize" mediation! The words are contradictory. There are no specialists for questions of tact; impartiality cannot be organized without a standard; above all, the eventual aggressor might not be very amenable to the opinion of mediators who could not directly set the sanctions in motion. . . . Certainly, everything possible must be done to avoid a repetition of the legal tragedy of 1914. At that time, no tribunal was equal to the necessities of the situation; the Hague Court was incompetent, and the Conference of Ambassadors—composed of virtual enemies, who had not ventured to dictate even to the Balkan nations the year before—was suspected of partiality. But the happy medium between the arbitrary use of force and the rigour of the law, which was lacking, can only be attained by educating public opinion and organizing its control. Moral forces must be developed! The Governments themselves will end by bowing to them.

[1] This is what M. M. Schücking and Wehberg suggest in their interesting commentary on the Covenant of the League of Nations, *Die Satzung des Völkerbundes* (Franz Wahlen, Berlin.)

DISARMAMENT

If these objections are admitted, will that be a reason for falling back all the more eagerly on the last hope of the pacifists—disarmament? Will it be said that disarmament must be hastened, in order to deprive the States of the means of injuring one another, as it is so difficult to compel them to agree? No doubt, an effective organization of peace admits of, or rather, naturally involves some alleviation of the burden of military expenditure. A reduction in the effectives would set economic and moral forces free, which might be applied to works of peace. Some system of regulating armaments might facilitate the victory of all over each which is the object of the Geneva sanctions, but the pleasant discussion that has been carried on during the last few years has been little more than a concession to pacifist opinion. A Platonic concession in any case; a dangerous concession if it accustoms people to regard disarmament as a scientific problem.

Some reservations might even be made with regard to the principles. We might point out that absolute disarmament would tend to thwart the activities of the League. Who is to spike the aggressor's camouflaged guns, if force is officially excluded? And if only certain nations disarm, is it just to guarantee them help which they say they are unable to give? The question has al-

ready been discussed *à propos* of Denmark, and Germany took advantage of this to limit her obligations without restricting her rights. We might also ask whether it is true that militarism has decreased in proportion to the reduction in the effectives, as is generally assumed, or whether it is not, on the contrary, more rampant than ever in the standing armies which the States deprived of conscription must develop. A lover of paradoxes could easily maintain that a State dominated by a Praetorian army, and desirous of evading its international obligations, would be an incarnation of the ideal pursued by the votaries of disarmament. . . .

But a truce to these sacrilegious thoughts! In any case, the fact remains that public opinion has been misled by the relatively auspicious precedent of the Washington Conference. Hasty and deceptive analogies have been established between naval and military disarmament. The fact that the one is easily controlled, and that it is very difficult to keep an eye on the other, was overlooked. It seemed to be forgotten, above all, that in the old continental Europe, influenced by time honoured traditions, the material and moral elements of the problems are inextricably interwoven. Justice demands that the expenditure and the number of effectives should be reckoned conformably with indices varying according to the special circumstances, but politics prevent agreement in determining these indices. How can heterogeneous systems be reduced to a common denominator?

What value is to be put upon the extent of the territory, its population, its natural possibilities, and its degree of industrialization? How is an opinion to be formed as to whether a country's military forces are really intended for the maintenance of its internal security and of international law and order, conformably with the spirit of the Covenant, seeing that this division is only represented to a small extent by a differentiation of armament? Even if an understanding were reached with regard to the returns of the present or virtual forces, how are the dangers to be measured which might justify them? Moreover there could be no question of doing more than establish a proportion between first line troops. In case of another great European war, involving a long period of unrestricted and uncontrolled armament, the proportions established would soon be annulled in the heat of the struggle, and the Geneva regulations would have no influence on its decisive phases. Will it be said that the question is precisely of putting that party at a disadvantage from the outset, whose natural wealth would be likely to give it the advantage in course of time? But to establish an exact balance it would be necessary to forsee the exact length of the conflict. That is absolutely Utopian. . . . In reality, Russia will provide a fluctuating index for all the competitors for a long time to come, and colonial necessities will justify the maintenance of considerable armies, admitting of an increase in the mother country's

effectives in case of danger. Sceptical and bellicose Governments will consequently have excellent pretexts for not disarming, and the others will represent their necessary budgetary reductions as sacrifices to an international ideal. As to the statistics put forward on all sides, they will only reflect the dominant tendencies, for, in the present state of the world, every technical problem that is too complex becomes a sentimental problem.

A discussion embarked upon under these conditions is liable to open up fresh fields of hostility between the Governments. It may give them the means of interfering in the domestic affairs of neighbouring countries, of discovering subjects of dispute, not only as before, in the external activities of their enemies, but in their laws and customs, and of denouncing supposed bellicose developments, according to arbitrary standards, which would serve as a justification for their own militarism. It would be a particularly great danger for France, who, amongst the disinterested naval Powers, Germany being theoretically disarmed and Russia taking no part in the matter, would be the natural victim of this pacifist battle, either in her own person or that of her allies. Many enlightened Europeans realize this, and are not very anxious for the Conference. The aim of diplomatic *finesse,* in this matter, is to throw the responsibility for adjournment, or for eventual defeat, on to one another. Our delegates showed in 1926

that skilful manipulation can transform the most ardent protagonists of disarmament into its antagonists. In case of need, they will know how to represent the reductions we make spontaneously, in such a light as to be universally applauded, and how to reply to indiscreet questions by other indiscreet questions. . . .

As to the practical results of a European or a world-wide discussion, there is only one that can reasonably be expected—not disarmament, nor even a reduction of armaments, at the most an undertaking not to increase them, the institution of a military "maximum," which would not put a stop to competition, but would limit its extent. In this, as in the matter of juridical organization, the simplest methods will achieve the greatest measure of practical justice. To endeavour to apply a criterion to the ratio of armaments, or even to restore the proportion existing at a particular time, (it has been suggested that 1900 or 1913 should be chosen) would be simply to defeat the end in view. The first thing is to stabilize the *status quo* itself, though it may be subject to modification by equitable compromises wherever the disparity may be too striking. Starting from this point, one can imagine there being proportionate and automatic reductions in future, discussion of details at every phase of the process being thus avoided. These reductions, moreover, ought not to apply to length of service, which is indissolubly bound up with the general organization of the army, and consequently

cannot be continually modified, but rather to military expenditure, which is very far from being an altogether satisfactory criterion, but it has the advantage of being a very clear test, and one which would facilitate control by the pressure of public opinion.[1] This general organization having been prepared, and everyone having gone home, the real problem would still remain to be dealt with. In reality, the form and extent of a country's armament ought to reflect its foreign policy. That is to say that France alone can judge of her own requirements within the maximum limits fixed, and that she cannot do this until her international policy is defined.

PAN-EUROPA

Another school of reformers, who consider the organization of the League of Nations both too cumbersome and too elastic, propose the substitution of a more limited body, comprising only the European continental States (with the exception of Russia), but securing a more complete fellowship between them, which might even go so far as to abolish customs barriers, amalgamate the armies, and set up a supreme Government. A United States of America, they say. The programme looks so simple that it has found both friends and enemies. The latter are pleased to denounce it as containing the germ

[1] *Disarmament*, by Professor Baker, who is also the author of a useful work on the Geneva Protocol (King and Son), will repay study. His pacifism sometimes seems to us to be out of keeping with the realities, but he is alone in having seriously examined the question.

of an anti-English alliance, of a radical change in the economic laws of Europe, and of a policy of intercontinental rivalry. For our part, we do not regard the movement so courageously led by Count Coudenhove-Kalergi, in that light. We believe that his intention, in putting the word "Pan-Europe" into circulation in the intellectual world, was to sum up a legitimate idea briefly, and in such a way as to attract attention, which, if set forth in detail, would be too complicated to stimulate the imagination or rouse enthusiasm for lowering customs duties and abandoning territorial claims between the Central Empires and the West. Perhaps nothing but a new political religion could overcome the practical difficulties in the way of peace. We therefore willingly adopt this word, as a rallying cry for the masses, and in so far as it does not create illusions amongst the *élite*, with regard to the real complexity of the work to be done.

The United States of Europe? That may perhaps be the generic name given some day to a whole network of agreements of a widely different nature, but the ideal of federation would be prejudiced by an attempt to realize it directly. In particular, its protagonists must take care not to fix the frontiers of their continent beforehand, on the strength of a preconceived theory, and try to crystallize it in an invariable political form. In the first case, they would seem to be organizing an alliance against the Powers excluded from it; in the second, they

would rouse the hostility of particularist cultural forces. The movement in favour of *rapprochement* must take advantage of every opportunity that occurs, relying sometimes on Governments, sometimes on public opinion or interest; the general idea must be adapted to local requirements, and the formula of union must be sufficiently elastic to be proposed to all. Those who either would not or could not support it will set their faces against it of their own accord. The result will probably be an organization different enough to what was first contemplated. Certain Powers, better endowed from the military point of view and more exclusively interested in the European continent, might consider forms of guarantee and combination amongst themselves, of which others would be afraid. Similarly, in economic matters, certain obstacles which would delay union between rivals might be disregarded by the complementary nations, and as all the countries have both common and rival interests, they will reply in the affirmative or negative, according to the questions put to them. It is true that political considerations will tend to simplify the process, to make national solutions prevail, and a reasonable forecast may be risked with regard to this, but it would be a mistake to set it up as a dogma from the outset. The Pan-Europeans must not choose enemies, even amongst institutions. They have understood that, no doubt, seeing that at their recent Vienna Conference, they stated their intention of issuing an invitation to

England, without any hope of its being accepted, and that they showed great respect for the League of Nations, whose place they really intend taking.

So much for the means. But a few remarks may also be made with regard to the end. In order to rouse public opinion, and make international *rapprochement* easier for it to imagine, the Pan-Europeans assign it a conventional limit known to all, but they themselves are obliged to propose corrections in the recognized geographical divisions. Their "Europe" is bounded by the English Channel and the Vistula, and includes parts of Africa and Asia. Then why not frankly abandon the popular idea of it? Is it impossible to go beyond the new limits at which these innovators stop short? Must it be admitted that there will necessarily be a hiatus between the different organizations of peace? To admit that would be to misunderstand Great Britain's natural rôle, which is to form a bond of union between the continents. If the idea of an inter-continental League of Nations were officially abandoned, it would none the less continue to be embodied in the British Government, which would join several associations, and form the link between them.

It is true that reasonable Pan-Europeans do not exclude any rallying-cry. They only say, with justice, that it would be impossible to settle all the questions simultaneously, and they set up an order of emergency precedence amongst them. That being so, we must ask

ourselves, above all, what their analysis of the present international situation is worth? It seems to us to have had two successive and very different phases. First an endeavour to narrow down the problem propounded by the League of Nations, as being too vast, and to substitute for it an enquiry into the vital difficulties which are engrossing the attention of the peoples of Eastern Europe; then a recoil from these difficulties, and an effort to avoid them by diverting attention to other matters. Endeavours are made at Vienna as at Geneva, to settle the Franco-German problem, but, in the end, it is always the stumbling block. Ideas cannot solve this conflict; as long as it exists, they will be distorted by passion, adopted or rejected, according to the hostile interests, and consequently unable to exert their healing influence. Do we not already see the Pan-European doctrine welcomed with open arms by those who think it may be the means of avoiding a revision of the eastern frontiers, and opposed by those who regard it as a preparation for the "*Anschluss*"? We need only reverse the point of view to have an idea of what public opinion is in Germany. There must be a great work of *rapprochement* between Paris and Berlin, before the people can rise to the mere idea that phenomena change their signification according to the general circumstances. European peace will be won, like the great war, on the Rhine.

FRONTIER RECTIFICATION

OTHER politicians, animated by considerations analogous to those we have just explained, conclude that it is useless to think of perfecting peace institutions without first paving the way to peace by repairing the injustices of the territorial distribution. M. Nitti, in particular, has pleaded this theory in books which are very widely read.[1] It is natural that a statesman who tried to prevent the Allies from making their worst mistakes, should adhere all the more firmly to the proposals which might have averted them, as their consequences become evident. But new generations are entitled to give preference to a point of view other than that formed in 1920. Thinking over the state of international affairs before acting, they no longer find the exact situation denounced by M. Nitti. The irrevocable march of time makes many of the discussions futile which were originally legitimate. Accomplished facts are never long in finding moral support, for the maintenance of the *status quo* is in the interest of most of the Conservative Powers, and it provides the most simple criterion of peace. In any case, repairing an injustice does not re-establish justice, for a frontier is very seldom fixed from the sixfold point of view of geography, ethnography, history, the will of people, economy and strategy. There is no solution that

[1] Notably *l'Europe sans Paix* (Stock) and *La Paix* (Rieder).

does not inflict some injury, and no peace that can satisfy every one. But many grievances gradually die out within the framework of an established order; the economic position changes, the frontier wounds heal, and the artificial conditions created by the diplomats become real. There is something conservative in the idea of revision, immediately after partition, but it soon comes to be regarded as revolutionary. The only injustices that call for reparation are those which remain crying injustices after the lapse of a generation, and they are rare. Finally, how could a one-sided sacrifice be the means of reconciling the interested States? At a time when the Allies were gladly indulging in inactive pacifism, due to a desire to preserve their forcible conquests cheaply, M. Nitti must be given credit for having pointed out that a policy of *rapprochement* cannot ignore territorial questions, and that a stable peace is of far more importance to each and all than the attribution of this or that territory. But we consider that what he said was addressed to both parties, and that today, in the regions where the historical rights are incontestable, and where the argument of possession has been reversed, it must be interpreted at most as advice to compromise. Moreover, we may remark that, in order to justify pure and simple revision, M. Nitti was obliged to appeal, sometimes to the text of the treaties—which he incidentally repudiated; sometimes to the principle of nationalities, the full application of which would revolutionize

even the map of Tyrol, which is certainly not what our author desired; sometimes to the interest of civilization, which would be leaving the control of the sources of wealth to the best organized Powers; and he thus introduced a hierarchical idea irreconcilable with his radical pacifism, based on equality. The truth is that, between so many contradictory points of view, the only common factor is good sense, opportunity, and the spirit of peace. A man must be rather biassed who attaches an absolute value to a statute, whatever it may be, above all, to a statute that has lapsed. Rigid theories, even when they are pacifist, have always some lurking affinity with war.

We certainly do not think that compromise, which leaves both parties unsatisfied, is necessarily the peace formula. Ingenious solutions, such as neutralization, autonomy, separation of economic from political interests, etc., which theoretically dispose of apparently insoluble problems, may succeed in the west of Europe, but in the east, just where the contested territories are situated, racial hatred, mutual distrust, and the encroachment of the Governments on private life, often prevent any practical application of these distinctions. A choice must be made, the antagonisms are too great to permit of neutrality, and the international systems visualized end in subordination or paralysis. Moreover, the difficulties which result from the territorial distribution are much less due to its intrinsic defects than to

its pyschological repercussions. Dantzig's trade has been doubled. The partition of Upper Silesia has been effected without difficulties. Traffic through the Corridor is admirably managed. And yet the history of the Dantzig administration is that of a long legal contest between Prussians and Poles, in which questions are only solved after appeal to every possible authority; Silesia suffers because it shares the Polish atrophy, due to the economic conflict between Warsaw and Berlin, itself determined by moral causes; and land in the Corridor has depreciated in value, the undertakings which are started there cannot obtain any credit. A distribution of national territory which is of no serious account in peace time, seems insupportable because it is always associated in the mind with the possibility of war. The Germans make the doubtful wishes of a population with two languages and two religions a pretext for their dissatisfaction, just as the Poles did for their claims, but, in reality, although the zones have no strategical value, and will always be at the mercy of the first sudden attack, it is a question of security. A Russo-Polish war in 1920; a Polish revolution in 1926; the spectre of invasion is immediately conjured up!

This frontier hysteria can only be allayed by a transformation of the whole European atmosphere, which, after all, comes within the province of the Great Powers. No doubt it can be maintained that certain territorial revisions are literally indispensable to the dip-

lomatic *détente*. That is a sort of vicious circle. But it is none the less advisable to make the relative importance of the questions clear, for this authorizes us to bring these eastern difficulties into the general scheme of our study, disregarding illusory projects of local conciliation. Once more, we come back to the Franco-German problem, or rather, since the victors still have the advantage of the initiative, to the problem of French policy.

But when we approach this domain, we find other Utopists before us in the field. In fact, our differences of opinion, during the last few years, have seemed to consist in the opposition between two fictitious policies, neither of which could be carried into effect.

HERRIOT'S POLICY

ONE of them, that of Herriot, looked to the Versailles Treaty and the development of a French type of democracy in Germany, to bring about a Franco-German reconciliation.

The first proposition of this policy was responsible for an era when the French people imagined that the League of Nations could effectively act as guardian and conciliator at one and the same time, and when the Germans made up their minds that it would remain a tool in the hands of the victors, even under the most pacific French Governments, and consequently distrusted it. The mistake made can also be historically explained.

Excessive "Poincaréism" had changed the nature of the problem, and at the same time aggravated it. France had shown herself lacking in the spirit of inter-allied solidarity which characterizes the Treaty, by applying military sanctions single-handed, and in its spirit of respect for nationalities by encouraging separatist adventures. Many thought that when these violations were discontinued, it would be easy to come to an understanding on the basis of the Treaty restored to its integrity. But another, more vital question then arose, which eclipsed the first. This time the problem was how to regulate war itself. It is certainly not impossible to reconcile a whole series of compromises with the text of a Treaty which anticipates, and in itself makes provisions for its eventual revision, but it is absurd to expect Germany to consent, of her own free will, to execute one-sided, unequal, and arbitrary measures, even if they are perfectly legal. It must be remembered, moreover, that in order to carry on the efforts of the Versailles legislators, a choice must be made between the different courses they indicated—virtual and full execution of the Treaty, occupation of the Rhinelands and Franco-German equality in the League of Nations, a guaranteed *status quo* and a possibility of revision.

The second proposition was the subject of a press campaign which risked the fate of the new policy of *rapprochement* by staking it on the results of the German elections. Instead of reconciliation between the two coun-

tries being envisaged as a stern necessity, demanding mutual concessions of the utmost importance, but in the permanent interest of both, it seemed a matter of political sympathy between analogous Parties. The offer of an *entente* was only made to certain sections of German opinion, thus leaving it at the mercy of the change in the majority. Fortunately Hindenburg's election, in the spring of 1926, was the means of dissociating the two questions. In reality, after this apparent reversion to Nationalism, the movement in favour of *rapprochement* gained strength, and was happily directed into one channel.

These two mistakes were due to an excessively generalized and simplified psychology, which did not take into account differences of national tradition and geographical situation, and judged the world through the medium of the French revolution. Just as it had prompted us, in colonial matters, to imbue very undeveloped peoples with modern ideas of policy which must necessarily be interpreted in a wrong sense, and to our disadvantage, in those regions, it was responsible for our not having recognized the possibilities of "Europeanization" which have always existed in the "eternal Germany." The leader of the Cartel, while recommending a new policy of *rapprochement,* continued to propagate the official version of the causes of the war with as much complacency as his Nationalist opponent, and perhaps with more inward conviction. This was flatter-

ing two equally popular but inconsistent theses. In order to bring them into apparent harmony, it was necessary to make a violent contrast between the Germany of 1914 and the Germany of 1926. This made it impossible to recognize that, amongst our neighbours, the spirit of peace has never been irreconcilable with respect for authority and for the army, or separable from a desire for expansion; or that Parliamentarism in Germany will always be tempered by Party discipline, by a sense of the common interest, by a certain distance between the electorate and those elected, and by veneration for German history. Our enemies were judged by our national standard, as though they were Frenchmen, and found wanting, and all that was done to settle the problem of peace was to assume, or predict—according to the degree of optimism felt—an impossible attachment on their part to the *status quo*. The fact that German pacifism is not in itself simply an attitude of resignation, but an effort to incorporate the essential values of war into peace, was forgotten. Need we grieve or be indignant because we see a people struggling, that is to say, living? We venture to say that we ought, on the contrary, to rejoice, for the more their ambition increases, the better our former enemies will realize that, in order to satisfy it, they must begin by getting over their grudge against us. Their much abused "expansionism" may then become an incentive to peace. The existence of a non-expansionist Government in Berlin,

which would not really represent the nation, or would show that it was incapable of playing its part in the defence of European order, would, on the contrary, be a menace to peace.

Yet some amends were made in 1924. France resumed the peace initiative, and recovered the sympathies she had lost by her policy of isolation and territorial pledges; but the moral prestige thus gained could not be turned to account, for lack of a constructive plan, and of salutary propaganda at home. The Geneva Protocol presented the world with a model organization, but, unfortunately, the conditions essential to carry it into effect were lacking. A long struggle will be necessary before the desired goal can be reached.

THE NATIONALISTS' REGRETS

In the other camp, the Nationalists have given vent to prolonged lamentation. Since 1918, they have been denouncing the concessions made by our Governments, none of whom have been able to satisfy them, for they have all had to bow to the necessity of compromise. Their "weakness" is said to be the cause of our difficulties. These complaints encourage the policy pursued by the "moderates." It may therefore be of interest to review the historical reasons for them.

THE VERSAILLES TREATY

Some of these malcontents regret that steps were not taken to ensure the Treaty being carried out in full.

They are ignorant, or pretend to be ignorant, of its true nature. They think they can read a definite policy into formulas which were chiefly designed to conceal disagreement. The victory achieved divided those who had gained it. Time being of importance, their divergent views had to be collectively inserted in the text, which ought either to have reconciled them, or decided between them. In default of real unity, the Peace Treaty could not be drafted in logical terms. Hence its contradictions, its ambiguities, and its intentional omissions. The real decisions were left to a future which, as they all knew, must militate against cohesion between those who had been allies during the war. In the case of many of the delegates, this was simply due to weakness, but for one of them, at least, it was a tragedy. Every page of the Treaty shows that the transfer of the victors' rights to the universalized League of Nations, which is now denounced as disloyalty to the spirit of Versailles, was the work of President Wilson himself, who was the more bent on providing for the future the more he sanctioned the ambiguities and injustices of the present, for imperative reasons of expediency. He signed provisional decrees, and then immediately set up a means of revising them. Let anyone read the revelations made by his collaborators. Let them follow the phases of the conflict that went on in his mind, and even in his nervous system, and see that all these alternations were reflected in the

text of the Treaty. They will then understand that the "Versailles policy" is an empty formula.

DISMEMBERMENT OF GERMANY

Others, more numerous, include the Treaty in their anathema. They fix on its authors as the scapegoats, holding them solely responsible for mistakes which outbid one another to an extent which itself makes them jointly and severally liable, and which were those of an epoch, of a régime, and of the blind god of war. They trace back their hopes beyond them, and condemn them in respect of imaginary possibilities which they date from the 11th of November. It must be remembered, first of all, that if a mistake was made in concluding the armistice, it was a military, not a civil mistake, for the Commander-in-Chief was free to choose. As to the possibility of Germany's dismemberment, which is now the favourite argument of the Royalist Party, it was denied in 1919 by its most authoritative spokesman, M. Jacques Bainville. He wrote at that time that the movement in favour of German unity was not at an end, that particularism could not well be carried on from outside without injuring itself, and that the dismembered portions would inevitably reunite.[1] Let us, however, assume that this dismemberment was possible and confine ourselves to recalling what the immediate con-

[1] Quoted by M. Andre Tardieu in *La Paix* (Payot).

sequences would have been. Every one agrees that such a policy was incompatible with the payment of reparations, which implies a centralized Germany. It would therefore have been necessary to declare openly, at the height of the enthusiasm of victory, that "the Boche would not pay"; to destroy the confidence which enabled us to raise loans, and was accountable for the post-war optimism in business circles; to set strict limits to our expenditure on reconstructing the devastated areas, and lose no time in introducing harsh fiscal measures. The fine outburst of Nationalism that these selfsame "particularists" viewed with favour from elsewhere, and that even they themselves were not always above encouraging by holding out hopes of material gain, would have been cut short at once. Balkanization of Germany and payment for the war by the vanquished side—the relationship between these two simple policies, the outcome of the same mentality, was fatal to both. Each perished through the other in 1923.

THE MILITARY LEAGUE OF NATIONS

If our security could not be guaranteed by the dismemberment of Germany, it would at least have been possible, some critics say, to have insured it by the creation of a stronger League of Nations, supported by an international army. This was, in fact, the scheme proposed by M. M. Clemenceau and Bourgeois. Perhaps we need only say that both England and the United

States were firmly opposed to it. We may add, however, that such an organization, coupled with disarmament of the vanquished nations, would obviously have associated the decisions of the international Areopagus with the inequalities of strength, and thus have deprived it of the spiritual authority which is its *raison d'être,* as well as its most effective means of exerting influence. The members of the Council, who would have been in a position to give direct military orders, would no longer have troubled to rouse the world's conscience. Justice and truth would have lost the chances afforded them by liberty to discuss the matter beforehand. Moreover, the vanquished nations could not be expected to support the project unless their equality were restored, as regards armament. The organization of peace would consequently have been compromised, or indefinitely retarded. Finally, and above all, the project was not consistent with France's true interests. In reality, as M. Romier pointed out,[1] there was a risk of its leading to Europe being dominated by an enterprising General, a Frenchman perhaps, to begin with, but later on—? A country which is not numerically predominant must be careful not to stake all its chances on the military cards.

THE RHINE

THE same patriots delight in blaming our delegates for having given up the idea of a Rhineland Protectorate,

[1] *Explication de Notre Temps.* (Grasset).

as though the renunciation denoted lack of courage, in an era of nationalist demagogy! We have lost everything, they say, seeing that the Anglo-American guarantee, for which we sacrificed this prize, was only a shadow. This argument is very much weakened by the fact of our having recovered the English guarantee at Locarno. But supposing for a moment that our representatives at the Conference had adhered to their original positions. Supposing that Wilson and Lloyd George had yielded, in order not to delay the signature of the Peace Treaty. In default of an immediate rupture, it would at least have resulted in our very soon finding it impossible to collaborate with the Anglo-Saxon countries. The whole story bears witness to that. No guarantee, no credit for a France mistress of the Rhine. In those circumstances, could we have formed close ties with the Little Entente, which has always shown signs of faintheartedness during the disagreements between France and England? Could we have weathered our financial crisis without the good-will of our creditors? In any case, we should have had to forgo the reparations, for it was only the hope of securing immediate liberation of the Rhineland provinces that decided the German Government of 1924 to adopt a policy of payment. Consequently alliances, moratoriums, and payments would thus have been risked on the very doubtful hypothesis that there would never be a change in the conditions of war which would diminish the value of a fluvial barrier.

But these simple considerations are very rarely mentioned, and the "over-bidders" of 1919 continue to plume themselves on their opposition to the Treaty, as though it were a patriotic sacrifice, and affect to consider the difficulties in the way of peace arguments in support of their attitude. It is a lucrative attitude, like that of the busybodies who boast of having foreseen the war because they contributed to determine it at a time when fate still hesitated. To gain popular favour, it is well to be a prophet of evil during periods of suspicion, and a critic during periods of dissatisfaction.

VICTORIOUS RECONCILIATION

Finally, others, choosing the most comfortable position, pleasantly combining all the policies, admit that nothing could have been done without a Franco-German *entente*. But they would have concluded it at once, and at the time of the victorious occupation! No doubt they think that all the foolish claims current at that time, might have been incorporated in it. Yet these same critics assert that an ardent desire for revision of the eastern frontiers—which they refuse—has always been common to all the German Parties. Therefore they would not have obtained a confirmation of the territorial *status quo!* As to the payments demanded in the enthusiasm of victory, even if the Germans had been disposed to sacrifice their standard of life, they could never have effectuated them, according to the opinion of experts

throughout the world. Moreover, direct negotiation would not have sufficed, for it was partly a question of credit involving the collaboration of England and the United States. There was a time, no doubt, when it might have been possible to secure personal advantages from Germany, in the form, for instance, of partnership in her industries; but in so far as such forms of association accord with the mutual material interests of the two countries, they are still applicable. In as far as they would have limited Germany's sovereignty, they might have been traversed by domestic legislation. Lastly, in so far as they might have injured the interests of our Allies, the latter could have secured their revision on the inevitable day when our financial crisis must have compelled us to solicit their help.

Thus, in all these retrospective disagreements, the Nationalists set the field of the discussion in accordance with their preconceived theories, and then presume to draw lessons for the future from a doctrine which has not loyally accepted the test of facts; it has only been made to appear history.

THE MARIN POLICY

THE objections they make to the foreign policy of the Cartel are not altogether unwarranted. It is certainly unfortunate that it has not been possible to substitute anything but another sentimental effusion for our hatred of Germany, and that attention should have been so

focussed on these two extreme passions, that the community of interests between the two countries is seldom considered. It is also unfortunate that all our policy should seem to have been directed towards obtaining reassuring promises, when our security was neither directly nor immediately menaced. But if the policy pursued by the Government often seemed supine and vague, it was precisely because they were not compelled to define it by a rational Opposition. Having been turned out of office, the Nationalists thought they were not called upon to formulate a definite programme. They had not the courage—or the honesty—to put themselves in the place of the Government, and refrain from criticism which they would not be able to sustain. They have shown very ably that a Treaty which was "*trop doux pour ce qu'il avait de dur*" condemned us to a long series of compromises. No one would dispute that. But what do they propose? To revert to forcible measures? No, they quite realize the futility of that. A change of Government in France which would open up fresh possibilities? Is this seriously suggested? The best arguments in favour of a Franco-German alliance are to be found in the daily articles from the pen of Nationalist writers, but, as Vauvenargue says, because they are too weak to combine their disconnected maxims and form a rational whole from them, they place them at the service of a corrosive force. Those who are courageous enough to venture on anything more than cautious nega-

tions, admit the necessity for "conversations," but they demand guarantees. What guarantees? Written guarantees? The whole past forbids their relying on the promises of an enemy they have always denounced as a perjurer. Military guarantees? Legally, the occupation must come to an end in 1935.[1] Will they dare to say that

[1] This is sometimes disputed in legal circles. Let us therefore point out clearly how the matter stands. Our right to prolong the occupation of the Rhinelands beyond the fifteen years limit is subject, according to the Treaty (articles 429–431), to two conditions, failure to execute the Treaty, and the guarantee's proving insufficient to prevent German aggression. As regards the first point, we need only say that as the Reparation Commission has announced that Germany has fulfilled her Reparation obligations, and the Ambassadors' Conference states that she will have carried out her obligations in the matter of disarmament in a few months time, not only have the conditions on which we should have been entitled to prolong the occupation ceased to exist, but the conditions laid down by the Treaty, and defined by an interallied pronouncement on the 16th of June 1919, which provided for an earlier evacuation, will soon have been fulfilled. As to the second point, it must not be forgotten that the question of whether the guarantees were insufficient was to be decided by the Allies collectively. The Anglo-American guarantee having been unanimously considered sufficient for our security in 1919, and the English guarantee having since been recovered, we must therefore prove to our former allies that Germany's benevolent guarantee is not an adequate substitute for the American guarantee alone, although the latter was formulated in much less binding terms, and could not guarantee immediate help. Not only that, but according to M. Poincaré's interpretation (see the *Temps*, September 12–22, 1921) Germany is justified in saying that the non-ratification of the tripartite agreement of 1919 is *res inter alios acta*, and that it is only a question, in the Treaty, of guarantees to be given by Germany. Now as regards the western frontiers, she gave us all the guarantees we demanded at Locarno, therefore it may safely be asserted that we should have no chance of gaining our point, if we were to propose prolonging the occupation.

they have been advocating a policy for eight years, which only burdens the future with unfavourable psychological factors? Or that they are in favour of leaving us, at the end of that period, at enmity with Germany, with our Allies, and even with the text of the Treaty? Yet they talk of renewing our alliances. They denounce England's faithlessness, but in the same breath they demand a military agreement with her. They refuse to regard an insular attitude as permanent which nevertheless carries on the whole British tradition, and is now still further justified by the extra-European considerations which are engaging the attention of the British Government. In default of this Utopian alliance, they propose a continental combination, directed against Germany. But what Powers would it include? Amongst those they indicate, there are some which have shown a tendency to court external danger, in order, like Poland in 1920, to strengthen a newly formed unit, or like Italy in 1923, to consolidate an exceptional régime. What conditions would they not make before joining such a combination? What independence of us would they not show, if they saw that we were abandoning the alternative of an understanding with Germany? Others again—some of the little Entente States—might find it difficult to resist the new attraction of a *rapprochement* between Russia and Germany, a *rapprochement* which would be precipitated by this policy.

It is certainly easy to point to our mistaken diplo-

macy in explanation of the necessity for reconciliation, instead of recognizing that the war alliances were not permanent factors in international policy. Yet history is rich in analogous situations. It shows us that the Powers which protect the balance of power have always a tendency to turn against the belligerent whose victory they have ensured; that the variations in their policy are determined by the variations in the ratio of force, and that they become unfaithful to their allies in order to be faithful to their principles. Some "moderates," it is true, voluntarily declare that the "precautionary measures" they demand are not incompatible with an effort to improve the Franco-German relations. They represent alliances formed with the object of guaranteeing the conquests and prolonging the course of a successful offensive, as purely defensive. Their idea is to be reconciled with the enemy, but whilst continuing to occupy his territory. They are not afraid of the word *rapprochement*, but think that they can fence in all the ground on which *rapprochement* might be possible. They expect a gradual change in the adversary. What they propose, they say, is to employ every means of ensuring peace. A reply which betokens secret cowardice. The necessity for action necessitates a choice between the means. All life is a gamble!

THE TRUE CHOICE

THUS, since the 1924 elections, two policies have been represented in the French Forum, but both are almost illusory. Our real choice is between two others, which are never put into words. The one—the real Nationalist policy—proposes, not exactly to seek alliances (important alliances being just what are subject, in our case, to reconciliation with Germany), but to form a clientèle, as an accessory and provisional measure, and above all, to organize the *fara da se,* involving continual tension and rigid economy to enable us to keep up a large French army, in spite of our loss of wealth and credit. An austere policy, which is not lacking either in logic or dignity. For our part, we should not hesitate to support it, if the opposite experiment were not being sincerely tried, but today, and whilst there is still the choice, who would venture to defend it? Assuredly not our Nationalists, for they are euphemists, like some of their pacifist opponents, from whom they are only distinguished by a different vocabulary, in which abstract ideas are expressed in concrete words. And if by chance they did venture to do so, they would have no following in the country, no matter how extensive their propaganda might be.

The other policy is the one to which M. Briand committed the country at Locarno.

IV

LOCARNO—A POLICY

THE policy to which M. Briand committed the country at Locarno. . . . Is it really the one he explained to the Chamber? Some great diplomatic successes seem due to mysterious powers by which statesmen are guided, but which they do not altogether understand. To judge by some of his public statements, that is M. Briand's case. In reality, he has never ceased to associate his peace effort of 1925 with the one he had already made in vain at the beginning of 1922, and to regret that our domestic policy prevented the earlier realization of an aim he had always had in view. Has he forgotten that he asked Mr. Lloyd George for a unilateral alliance, and that, starting from that point, it would not have been easy to secure the mutual insurance to which Sir Austen Chamberlain agreed? What would have become of the "permanent *entente* between the General Staffs" contemplated by Lord Curzon in this Locarno scheme, which it would be no exaggeration to say makes a virtue of indiscretion between signatories? Even supposing that the mutual insurances could have been effected in 1922, is it not evident that England ranked first in importance yesterday, and that Germany will rank first tomorrow? But these are academic discussions. What-

ever their intentions may have been, the opposition encountered in the course of the negotiations obliged the parties at Locarno to reckon with the European realities, and thus to accomplish a work for posterity. Even if we admit that they may have been chiefly intent on drawing up a common formula in October 1925, it is none the less true that the reaction enables us to evolve a certain political philosophy from their achievement. We will examine it briefly.

THE DIPLOMATIC SUCCESS

Let us first dispose of the criticisms which apply to the execution of the work and its expediency. If we go back in mind to the course of the year 1925, the Locarno Conference seems to us to have been an indisputable success, for which the credit must be given to M. M. Briand and Berthelot. To adopt the adversaries' formula, and introduce one's own ideas into it, is surely the absolute test of success? The French delegates achieved this, thanks to a two-fold bluff. They induced the German delegates to sign by threatening them with an Anglo-French military agreement which was an impossibility, and they obtained the guarantee England had hitherto refused, without either conditions or compensations, by introducing the absurd hypothesis of a direct French attack upon Germany into the agreement, thereby enabling the British Government to enter into what appeared to be bilateral engagements.

What sacrifices were made that could give us reason to regret such a brilliant *tour de force?*

The renunciation of a military agreement with England? If by this we are to understand an official and secret *entente,* it would obviously be incompatible with the reciprocity insisted upon by the Locarno agreements, but it was already incompatible with the publicity required by the organization of the League of Nations. If, on the other hand, it is a question of private conversations, that resource would again be open to us in case of a German menace recognized as such by the two Governments. Who could prevent the senior French and English officers from then devising a system of defence, in the course of friendly conversations? They would, moreover, be conversations of limited value, seeing that England has no large army to put into the field at the beginning of a war. In short, the most we lose is an official signature, which, according to the precedent of 1914, would have remained subject to final ratification by the English Government and Parliament. No doubt, this signature might again have contributed towards the national decision. But the great merit of the League of Nations is just that it does not admit of any forecast of the future. We have to be either for or against it, a clear choice must be made. On the one hand, we have the theoretical possibility of setting up a permanent antagonism which would pervert justice and compromise peace, on the other, a vast alliance open to us and at our

service, which can only be directed against an aggressor. Now, long before Locarno, the British nation, taught by the experience of 1914, had pronounced against the former alliances, and in making this choice they deprived us of the best argument in favour of a contrary choice.

The loss of our right to intervene single-handed in Germany? To regret that would be to admit the hypothesis of a conflict between France and the League of Nations, although the identity of our interests with the general interest has always been the soul of our propaganda, the surest support of our alliances, and still is, to many Frenchmen, the very foundation of patriotism. It was certainly agreed that our sovereignty should to some extent be transferred to our guarantors. England confirmed the text of 1919 (article 44 of the Versailles Treaty) by a formal promise of intervention, having declared in that text that she would regard any violation of the Rhineland zone as a "hostile act," but at the same time limited its application to "flagrant" cases which necessitated "immediate" intervention. She thus assumed a right to judge the case, which obliges us to consult her before acting, and enables her to influence the decisions of the League of Nations in advance. A traditional tendency to move slowly, combined with anxiety to remain on good terms with her Italian co-guarantor, and a wish to remain at Geneva, will, no doubt, deter her from making unwise use of this power,

but her interest in gaining the approval of the majority of the Council would assure us, if necessary, that it would be loyally used. It is for us to create a clear situation, which will admit of no hesitation on the part of our protectors.

Recognition of reactionary Germany? This argument of M. Bainville's turns against him. What seems to him to condemn the Agreement is just what gives it its value. A Hindenburg whose word is credited is also a Hindenburg who risks being discredited. The failure of an unfortunate press campaign only emphasizes the importance of this rally. We ourselves have never fixed exaggerated hopes on a "democratic" Germany, and will only deal with just plain Germany.

The evacuation of Cologne an unacknowledged repercussion of the Agreements? At the end of 1925, it was imperatively called for by the Moroccan war.

A DYNAMIC AGREEMENT

At this point of our inquiry, many difficult questions may appear to have been solved at a stroke, and at the cost of purely fictitious sacrifices. Now we do not believe in miracles. Let us therefore carry our inquiry a little farther, and first ask whether the important questions have really been settled? Locarno? A fine title! But is it not rather a question of a newly opened than of a closed chapter? In reality, close study of the text of the Pact shows that the delegates have carried their

difficulties forward; they have made present peace by mortgaging the future; they have anticipated the logical date for its signature, transformed the prior conditions into probable consequences, and assumed that the mere news of the Treaty would make it easier to accept its ulterior inconveniences. It is a dynamic agreement. Hence the risk of a two-fold misunderstanding. On the French side, there may be reluctance to develop its corollaries; on the German side, there may be exaggerated hopes which, if they were disappointed, might lead to a moral disavowal of the signature given. Now if the feeling changes for the worse, the Governments will be more inclined to exploit the omissions in the Pact than to give effect to its provisions. In studying the organization of security, we have noted the extent of this danger.

Fortunately, powerful inherent logic compels the signatories of the Rhineland Treaty to continue their efforts. The principle of equality has been introduced, like a bombshell, into the Versailles Treaty, which they professed to respect. Locarno has dictated a new policy as regards all the questions that have been raised—responsibility for the war, disarmament, demilitarization, and colonial mandates. Even the incalculable forces of the future have been given a certain tendency in advance. In fact, in trying to guarantee peace, the jurists have assigned it the most obvious and easily controlled tests, rather in the same way as those who have to im-

pose taxation look for the most tangible signs of wealth. Some injustice in principle, they think, is less dangerous than the multiple injustices screened by chicanery. They have therefore directed all their efforts to the repression of material aggression. Nothing but violation of the frontiers brings the system into play. The causes are disregarded in order to deal with the effect. It does not follow that Germany is freed from certain restrictions laid down by the Treaty, but it has become less dangerous for her to disregard them. An eminent lawyer, M. Politis, studying the Locarno agreements, asks, for instance, what the legal position of States would be which took military steps to oppose an attempt to reattach Austria to Germany; and his answer is that if they were to act, instead of confining themselves to preparations, they would be exceeding their rights and imperilling peace. It would therefore be necessary to bring the case before the Council of the League of Nations, in virtue of Article 11 of the Covenant, and request that measures should be taken against the offender, and authority given to the interested States to insure the execution of these measures themselves, in case of need.[1] Thus unanimity would be necessary, not to authorize the *Anschluss*, but to prevent its being effected. Germany is placed in the position of advantage formerly occupied by the Allies.

[1] *Revue du Droit International et de Législation comparée* (1925, No. 6).

What then is the eventual meaning of the signatures exchanged in October 1925?

They mean that England has found a way of paying her moral debt to the Continent by abandoning all idea of reverting to the former alliances, and by insuring herself against a resuscitation of the Geneva Protocol; that Germany promises to express her Imperialism in European terms, to resort to roundabout means of satisfying her claims, on the ground of international sanction, in short, to exchange the material weapons which did not suffice to insure her victory in 1914 for moral weapons; that France surrenders her nominal rights as the victor (the right to despise her adversary, her legal rights, etc. etc.), accepts a certain limitation of her spheres of interest in the west, and purchases voluntary recognition of her frontiers by agreeing to a modification of the military clauses of the Treaty; finally, and above all, the signatures mean that these three Powers undertake to continue their collaboration.

The great merit of the delegates is that they have made this collaboration easier. The dangers that they boast of having exorcised—annexation of the Rhineland by France, a direct attack upon France by Germany —only existed in the popular imagination, but they engrossed it to a dangerous extent, and prevented consideration being given to the real problems. Today, thanks to a document, these spectres have almost dis-

appeared. The periodical articles in the newspapers of the two countries, on the organization of separatism in the Rhinelands or the preparation for German *revanche*, have become more rare. The field has been left clear. The work remains to be done.

LOCARNO AND GENEVA

How will this new grouping react on the development of the League of Nations?

On the occasion of the two sessions of 1926, gloomy-minded people pointed out the danger Locarno would be to Geneva. They deplored Germany's unreasonableness, and bewailed the secession of Brazil. In reality, Germany served the true interests of the Council, and helped to facilitate its unanimity, by opposing its indefinite expansion and the institution of semi-permanent members, sure of their re-election, and consequently less amenable. On the other hand, Brazil was far more likely to injure her own interests than those of the League by adopting an isolated attitude of protest which was not supported by the other South American States. Experience has shown that the League can afford to be fairly independent of the States which have no important European interests, and that it must, on the contrary, be very circumspect in the spheres where its action is most efficacious and its disappearance would be most dangerous. The crisis of 1926 would only have been serious if any of our own continental Powers could

have profited by the occasion to torpedo the institution itself. But there was, on the contrary, a distinct movement in the opposite direction after the March *contre-temps*, and the September session completely routed its enemies. Italy did not venture to disclose her private views, and we do not take Spain's temporary ill-humor very seriously.

In our opinion, far from being a menace to the League of Nations, the Locarno plan should enable it to find a way out of its difficulties by furthering one of its initial functions. Radiating from a solid central body, its ability to surmount crises is almost guaranteed. Supported by the *entente* between the principal European Powers, it can perfect the scheme for the pacific settlement of disputes which has hitherto been incomplete—at least, as far as the relations between those Powers are concerned. There is no longer any need for it to choose between victors and vanquished. The treaties on which it relies, applied or amended by agreement, are susceptible of gradually becoming common property. The inconsistencies we have pointed out, and of which the enemies of peace take advantage, may therefore gradually disappear one after another, thus facilitating the universality and unanimity of the League. Various amendments in its procedure have been proposed as a means of avoiding the paralysis which menaces the enlarged Council, such as its sub-division into Continental Councils, the appointment of Com-

mittees with limited powers, general elections, to permit the elimination of refractory members, etc. There is something to be said in favour of all these suggestions, but the formation of a central group suffices to combine and add to their advantages, provided that this group consists of the Powers most interested in preserving European order, and most capable of restoring it in case of a conflict. In reality, these Powers can contemplate the possibility of the League breaking up without anxiety, and this is just what makes its strength. The Governments which make a show of abandoning Geneva, always hope to obtain a price for their ulterior return. Under the Locarno régime, they would only be leaving the great Coalition in possession of the field. The malcontents will cling to the League like grim death in order to avoid this monopoly, and is it not possible that a day may come when even those who are now holding aloof will join it? The United States, for instance, might come into the League, without modifying their fixed policy, if they felt that they were definitely absolved by the local Powers from certain disquieting obligations. Have they not already given an instance of regional *ententes* in the Monroe Doctrine, which is incorporated in the Covenant? If this new Locarno group were to gain strength, to develop its bonds of union and its independence of the League of Nations, it would only be following this precedent. By a curious paradox, America's fleeting participation in the League will have enabled

Europe to form an independent organization. . . . This collaboration will no doubt determine the axis of the League, but is it not natural that this axis should pass through the zone of its greatest activity? Certain matters will be submitted to the judgment of the "extra-Locarnian" Powers, but the institution as a whole will benefit by this decentralization. There will not even be any infraction of the Geneva tradition, for the meetings of the Locarno signatories will differ very little from the small, informal meetings which the most influential members of the Council hold between themselves, in case of a serious dispute.

This limited association, which may safeguard the League of Nations by giving it a firm foundation, does not seem to be menaced today by any external danger. If it is kept up, the European continent will submit to its authority, for Russia, now prevented from joining it by a hopeless difference of principle, will be still more thrown back towards Asia, and the other Powers are not in a position to rebel. Is there any occasion for anxiety with regard to the yellow peril? As to this, the League of Nations in general, preserved, and perhaps even extended, will continue to afford intercontinental methods of conciliation, and it will be much easier for a united Europe to employ them, knowing that its intervention or non-intervention will be collective, than for a divided Europe, whose helplessness is an incentive to covetousness. If we want to observe the good rule of

guarding against the most urgent danger, the one from within must be given first consideration. Italy and France are divided by political principles and their Mediterranean rivalry; Germany and France by time-honoured prejudices; England and the other Powers by different traditions and control of their resources.

ITALY

Italy became a party to the Rhineland Treaty at the last moment, and she has never ventured to abandon the League of Nations, but her presence at Geneva does not exactly signify that she wishes to collaborate with the other members. On the contrary, she appears to some like an enemy, establishing himself in an advanced position in order to make it easier for him to blow it up. Is it advisable to denounce this openly? We think not. The ideological opposition between Cartelism and Fascism has very much contributed to poison Franco-Italian relations during the last few years. In this sphere, as in that of German affairs, the intrusion of doctrinal preferences needlessly aggravates the real complications. The French people certainly do not think, like their neighbours, that order constitutes a value in itself, and that it can guide, or even endure, of itself alone; nor do they regard it as necessarily incompatible with liberty, for they have succeeded to a very great extent in reconciling the two. It does not seem to them indispensable that freedom of conscience should be sup-

pressed in order that trains may run punctually. They consider that the social tranquility they enjoy naturally is very dearly paid for on the other side of the Alps, and think this shows that the country is inherently inclined to anarchy, and is perhaps on the verge of falling back into it. But these differences in the point of view are just what ought to warn us against judging Fascism too hastily as an Italian phenomenon. What is true for a country with an already long standing democratic tradition, may not always be true for a country with a more superficial political education. If we retain our sense of proportion, we shall be all the more justified in refusing the recipe our jubiliant neighbours are kind enough to offer us for restoring a currency which is hardly more menaced than their own.

Moreover, one consideration dominates all others—the advent of Fascism has not altered the permanent necessities of Italian policy, by which alone ours must be guided. They are necessities both of a material and psychological nature, which seem opposed to one another, but can be satisfied simultaneously, if a clear distinction is made between them; that is the whole problem of the Fascist policy. Under penalty of defeat, the Italian Government must observe the cautious attitude in great European questions which is incumbent on a poor country, unable to support itself and easy to blockade; it must avoid the great tests to which the depreciated *lira* would not be equal, and try to find a

practical solution of imperative economic problems. This solution cannot be found by Nationalist methods, for none of the territories that seem easy to obtain or conquer would provide Italy with the raw material or the *terrain* for colonization that she needs. On the other hand, an effort to colonize Italy itself might enable her to divert attention from causes of conflict for a long time to come, and an effort to collaborate with the other nations might ensure her possibilities of emigration and trade. In all the great economic disputes of the immediate future, Italy, naturally poorly endowed, has more need than any other country of a European organization capable of moderating the egotism of the great producers and defending the interests of the consumer. Only, to rally the Italian people to this policy, it must be presented under a martial aspect. M. Mussolini has all the qualities necessary for brilliant success in this. Let us hope that he may long be sustained by his legend, and dispensed from putting his words into action. In any case, experience has shown that after as well as before the march on Rome, Italy always supported projects which had previously been agreed upon between England and France. She followed the lead of her Allies at Locarno as formerly in Paris and London. If her rôle seemed to have become more important it was less due to the change of Government in Rome than to temporary general circumstances—during a certain period, increasing tension between England and France,

during another, diminution in the strength of the League of Nations. As a matter of fact, the influence of revolutionary Governments always increases in proportion to the differences of opinion which weaken Conservative Powers. Now the Fascist Government, estimating that the increase in the Italian population necessitates emigration, and that emigration necessitates conquest, is a natural enemy of the *status quo*, and of the present international law. We do not believe, for our part, that it will take the initiative in a war against a great European Power, but it would certainly be inclined to profit by the favourable situation another conflict would create, and perhaps even to further its outbreak. That is to say that if France, a neighbouring country with colonies and immigrants, gets into difficulties with another Power, she must reckon with an Italian manœuvre—a threat of intervention or offer of help at a price. From which we conclude that the Quai d'Orsay must pursue a policy of understanding with her other neighbours and endeavour to divert the Italian demands.

We must not over-estimate the assumed economic necessities on which the Italian Government bases its policy. Leading Fascists willingly admit, in private conversation, that better exploitation of southern Italy might delay the demographic problem for a generation to come. It cannot therefore be said that Italy's over-population makes colonial expansion a necessity; it only makes her desire it, and furnishes her with ar-

guments in its favour. Anyhow, what does it matter whether the problem is economical or psychological? We have always to remember that it exists, and our first duty is to direct Italian expansion towards the regions where we have only secondary interests. But when it comes to Franco-Italian questions themselves, it must certainly be admitted that the basis for negotiation is very limited, for the guiding principles of the two policies are diametrically opposed. The one tends to nationalize Italians living in foreign countries; the other to denationalize foreigners living in France or French possessions. These are questions in which patriotism makes it very difficult to come to terms. We cannot ignore a problem of this nature, one peculiar to the great struggle between rising nations and those which have found their place in the sun, and on which future conflicts may turn. But, for this very reason, it is advisable to preserve its general character. Any solution of it to the exclusive advantage of one Power would risk giving that Power a numerical preponderance and dangerous influence in certain parts of our empire. We must endeavour, on the contrary, to hold the scales evenly between the different elements of influence and immigration which we shall be obliged to admit. Some day, we may perhaps have to consider our colonial dominions, as a whole, in this spirit—to measure the proportion between our home resources and our possessions, and after reserving the parts essential to us—those which

produce raw material or otherwise contribute to our security—make experiments in the way of collaboration and exchange in the remainder. But these are questions of the future, and we shall have to consider them with Germany as well as Italy. They will be more easily solved if the Locarno *bloc* has remained homogeneous in the meantime. By cementing it and dissuading Italy from breaking away, and at the same time, preventing her from ruling it, we shall be depriving her of dangerous temptations, and we shall be more likely to preserve her friendship, which might be embittered, or become too dictatorial, if we had to deal with her single-handed.

THE LATIN *BLOC*

In fact, we are not amongst those who advocate a private alliance between France and Italy, which would supplement the Locarno policy of collaboration or compete with it. If such projects were to take shape, we should not be able to settle the matter without the criticism of the Fascist system which we hoped to avoid, and we should then find that neither the Francophil feeling which might further the arrangement, nor the general conditions which make alliance with a country desirable today, exist in Italy.

A private alliance between two States, within the general framework of the League of Nations, may be useful if it is concluded on a footing of equality, if its aim is to effect a common object or to guard against a

common danger, if it is in consonance with the spontaneous wish of the several peoples and seems likely to last for a certain time, and finally, if it can prepare the ground for more important *rapprochements;* but how could a Fascist Italy fulfil these conditions?

As to equality, there can be none between the party which asks for something, and the party which only wants to defend its possessions. We want nothing that Italy can give us. We do not covet any of her territories. Our industries are not dependent upon hers. We do not seriously fear any direct aggression on her part. We already have her guarantee, given at Locarno, against any German aggression. The aim of Italian policy is, on the contrary, to obtain a modification of our legislation which would perpetuate the definite stagnation of our population, and a sovereign participation in the administration of our African territories which would confirm the decline of our Imperial power. These claims, which have not yet been openly made by their diplomats, already engross public opinion in Italy, and it is not a mere chance that they blame France for their troubles. If an attempt is made on the Duce's life by an Italian, the Power reigning at Tunis is held responsible! If the Fascist policy develops, Italian Imperialism may take pleasanter forms tomorrow, but it will be none the less secretly hostile to French interests. There are offers of collaboration whose object is to anticipate what might be gained by a successful war.

As to the common danger, it is sometimes said to be the "*Anschluss*." That can be admirably demonstrated on paper, and M. Mussolini never fails to discuss the subject with the French Nationalists who dine with him, but we have only to read the Italian newspapers, particularly the articles authorized by M. Coppola, and inquire into certain negotiations, to see that the danger is not considered vital on the other side of the Alps. Moreover, although the menace to us is less direct, a promise to act in the common defence would only be given as a favour, calling for compensations.

Again, what would be the object of the alliance? It could only be found at the expense of third parties. The territories most calculated to satisfy the ambitions of the Italian Government are in our hands. The Franco-Italian *rapprochement* would consequently involve a renunciation on their part which could only have its counterpart in an association for other conquest. Far from conducing to peace, it would make us new enemies outside our natural zone of expansion. Such a policy would not long be compatible with our obligations towards the League of Nations. We should therefore have to choose between abandoning the alliance or depriving it of all moral foundation.

As to spontaneity, we will say nothing about the present "xenophobia" of the Italian people. We will only remark that nothing short of a frank discussion prior to the conclusion of an alliance would be a sure

guarantee of its sincerity, and that this discussion is not possible under the Fascist régime.

And its duration? It is true that Parliamentary Governments are short lived nowadays, but in the great constitutional countries (France, England, and Germany), tradition is so strong and custom so firmly established, that a change of Government can never involve any disavowal of State engagements. Dictatorships seem at first sight to be the Governments best able to carry out long-dated plans, but, in reality, nothing can be more uncertain than individuals, and more liable to be overthrown than absolute power. Having suppressed all opposition, that is to say, done away with all possibility of being succeeded in the regular way, Fascism is giving anarchy a great chance at a date which cannot be foreseen, and is preparing excuses for not carrying out its promises. Even if we set aside the hypothesis of revolution, and consider it possible for a state of the utmost tension to be permanent, the doubt as to the effect of personal influences, secret diplomacy, and police agencies, would still remain. The only element of certainty is the inevitable law which governs the evolution of Nationalist tyrannies, and compels them to direct the over-perfect unity they have created, against a foreign enemy; to substitute adventure for debate; to upset the regular oscillations of political life by a great national oscillation which must continually extend its range. Diplomacy has to suffer for all attempts to evade

the normal conditions of government—the Mussolini "pactomania"; the arbitrary agreements which create panic; the strange combination of fresh prestige with the traditional "*pourboire*" and see-saw; the feverish search for success in every direction at once, which only the other day was the ruin of Imperial Germany—who is there who can view all these phenomena without anxiety?

Considerations of this kind play no part in the present problem of Franco-German relations. There are none of the premonitory signs perceptible on the other side of the Rhine, which heralded the advent of Fascism. Capitalism has accepted the Constitution, and seems certain to hold its own under it. Foreign policy has been developing with remarkable regularity during the last few years, without being sensibly influenced by the fluctuations of domestic policy. It is possible to foresee and construct. Now Germany's present claims, unlike Italy's claims, do not directly menace French interests. Not only that, but whereas we have nothing over which we can bargain with Rome, except French territory and French citizens, we hold temporary, and perhaps damaging privileges that we can turn to account in dealing with Berlin. As a set off to bellicose tendencies, which might militate against a policy of *entente*, we have the alternative of an appeal to German public opinion, which is not dangerously united like Italian opinion, a powerful section of it being already strongly on the side

of the League of Nations. The industrial interdependence and the Reparation Agreement provide us with a basis for conversations to which we can see no equivalent in the direction of the Alps. In short, it is always easier to negotiate where interests are concerned, than when it is a question of prestige. It is true that, on the other hand, people appeal to Latin affinity and the tradition of hostility which divides France and Germany. But the hope of closing a long period of misunderstanding must also be taken into account as a factor likely to promote *rapprochement*. The great service of the League of Nations is precisely that it furthers *ententes* based on mutual fear rather than on mutual ambitions and antipathies. Those who would like to give the League a racial basis, like certain advocates of the Latin *bloc*, would thereby exclude the possibility of introducing new elements into it. Above all, they suggest a formula of union which cannot be generalized, and which is pregnant with fresh divisions. In approaching Germany, we have killed two birds with one stone, for we have secured the English as well as the German guarantee.

THE GERMAN SIGNATURE

We now come to the essential question—is Franco-German agreement possible, and if so, on what conditions?

Let us first dispose of the sentimental objections.

Except during the occupation of the Ruhr, German public opinion has never been exclusively, or even chiefly opposed to France. Even before the war, Germany thought of France mainly as a pawn in her struggle with Russia and England; the German documents recently published would prove this, if necessary. Similarly today, it is only through a reaction that her Nationalism has turned against France, and in proportion to the degree in which the latter poses as the protector of Poland. Recollections of the war have never determined our enemy's feelings so much as they have our own, and, moreover,—this is too often forgotten—the recollections are not the same. Germany was fighting a general war, and if she were to perpetuate the hostilities in spirit, she would be against the whole world. She must consequently choose between her former adversaries, and she will do so in accordance with her interests. No one who knows the secret history of contemporary diplomacy can doubt *rapprochement* having always been possible, with varying advantages. Before the war, it would have been based on an annexed or autonomous Alsace-Lorraine; today it would be built up on the basis of a reconquered Alsace-Lorraine. That, with the consequent accession of industrial power, is what we have gained by the war. Our losses are the depletion of the French Treasury, which might have given us financial control of the association, the loss of life during the war, which we shall not repair as

quickly as the vanquished enemy, and the prejudices engendered by its memory. It has been a current saying, since the violation of Belgium's neutrality, that the German signature is worthless, and it is not easy to induce people to admit that there are different kinds of signatures—democratic and autocratic, voluntary and compulsory, old and new. Would the German people have sanctioned the violation of Belgium's neutrality if it had been subject to the approval of Parliament, instead of being represented as a simple military measure, following on the declaration of war? Was our signature to the Treaty of Frankfurt of the same value in our eyes as the one we appended to the Versailles Treaty? Is honour absolutely pledged by provisions which would not have formed part of an agreement freely entered into? Is the obligation as strongly felt when it is a question of respecting clauses which apply to obsolete situations? We implicitly admit that it is not when we ask England to reaffirm the Rhineland guarantee which is already inscribed in Article 44 of the Versailles Treaty, and when we refuse to recognize the engagements we entered into during the war towards the United States as absolutely valid. But we forget it when it is a question of Franco-German relations. The fact is that a signature is only of value when it is given spontaneously, in the vital interests of the country, and guaranteed by a controlling authority and by sanctions. Thus reinforced, it enlists the feelings which

have inspired it on the side of law and morality, and fixes them for a certain length of time. Deprived of these conditions, it is worth less than the secret reservations made when giving it.

Judged by this criterion, we consider the German signature given at Locarno valid. The signatories were acting on the initiative of the German Government, and the policy of reconciliation with France thus inaugurated is an essential condition of their pacific expansion. The necessary control and sanctions seem to us sufficiently guaranteed, from the domestic point of view, by the Weimar Constitution, and, from the international point of view, by the patronage of the League of Nations and the engagement entered into by the guarantors, which, however, can be supplemented by a system of supervision in the neutralized zone. As to the question of fixing a criterion of aggression, which alone can provide absolute theoretical security, it is, as we have said, inconceivable until after a complete political evolution.

Will the agreement concluded be maintained, prolonged, and amplified, as it should be? That depends mainly on whether the Germans are wise enough not to call their renunciation of Alsace-Lorraine, and of naval expansion, in question, and on the victors having the sense to be satisfied with these two concessions of most importance, without trying to fence in all the other fields of expansion as well. The general conditions are

such that the German Government feels almost sure of recovering the position of equality of which the Versailles Treaty tried to deprive it, through the mere fact of peace being established. We cannot delude ourselves with expectations of being able to arrest Germany's progress; all we can do is to determine its direction. The Germans have learnt a lesson in method from the war. How dark their future would be if they could only recover their greatness by threatening war, thus exposing themselves to the certainty of fresh coalitions being formed against them! And what a humiliation for France if such a menace were to compel her to make the necessary concessions to German avarice! It would be wiser to reverse the problem boldly. Our prestige is incompatible with a policy of surrender, but not with a policy of association. It is easier for allies to divide zones of expansion between themselves than for enemies to make sacrifices to one another, which is always painful.

What then are the great difficulties to be foreseen, that might put the Franco-German *entente* to the test?

THE "ANSCHLUSS"?

HERE again, we must doubt the pretended economic necessities. Austria's fate is said to depend on her industrial future, and reattachment to Germany is represented as the only solution of a vital problem.

To begin with, is it a solution? It is quite a ques-

tion whether the geographical and technical factors would not continue to work against Austrian industries after her incorporation in the Reich; whether these industries, adapted to the capacity of a small country, could keep pace with the German industries, and whether the workmen who flatter themselves that they would secure higher wages would not find this temporary advantage rapidly counterbalanced by increased unemployment. Austrian statesmen are clamouring for free trade, but perhaps their country is not in a position to benefit by it. We may add that it would be rather difficult to carry the reattachment into effect. There are obstacles in the way of it, and limits to it, which cannot be disposed of in a day, such as difference in the law as regards rents, the revaluation of debts and mortgages, the manufacture and sale of tobacco, and international obligations concerning Reparations. In addition, Germany only represents a small percentage of Austrian trade. Consequently the German home market could not replace the natural market afforded by the Succession States. All that the advocates of the "*Anschluss*" can maintain is that the new Austro-German State would have greater authority to negotiate, whilst the opponents of the scheme argue that it would, on the contrary, impede negotiation by rousing distrust. The economic problem is therefore a general problem, as Mgr. Seipel, the Austrian Chancellor of the Exchequer, has always recognized. No private negotiation would suffice to solve

it, and the "*Anschluss*" could only contribute towards its solution by a political by-path. But what is more, the perfect solution sought does not exist. Many people emphasize the necessity of creating an Austria capable of existing, but they would be very much puzzled if any one asked them to define the conditions which enable a State to exist. In reality, Austria is in much the same position as several other States, whose territories do not provide all, or even the essential elements of subsistence. That is Switzerland's case, as M.M. Rist and Layton reminded us, in their admirable report to the League of Nations. England is similarly situated. States of this kind can prosper perfectly in a certain atmosphere of economic freedom, but they are peculiarly affected by all disturbances which interrupt the general development of trade. As regards this, the Austrians naturally attribute their difficulties to the erection of customs barriers all round them, but the restricted consumption, which is a general consequence of the war, must also be taken into consideration. To say that a country can or cannot "exist," is really too simple. It is more a question of whether it has the courage to carry out the difficult process of adapting itself to new conditions of life, to proportion its population to its power of production and its needs, either by organizing a certain amount of emigration, or by developing its home market, or by restricting importation and lowering the standard of life, or preferably by combining all these methods. The pro-

portion can be worked out in different ways, according to the strength of will for the task. Judging by Dr. Friedrich Hertz's admirable works,[1] it seems that this effort on the part of the country itself, with the help of foreign capital and a reduction in the tariffs imposed by the neighbouring States, might restore Austria's financial equilibrium. The only fear is that the recollection of past greatness, on the one hand, and the attractions of the sister and neighbouring Power, on the other, may give the Austrians a distaste for their present life, and that they may colour their statistics accordingly.

That is the general position of the problem. The question is how it enables us to act in Vienna and Berlin. In Vienna, the continual interaction of economic and political factors is particularly favourable to diplomatic influence. Although the menace of the union cannot be carried into effect at present, it is none the less useful to the Austrian intermediaries as a fictitious trump which they are prepared to sacrifice for the sake of immediate advantages. Inversely, the varying fortunes of these negotiations tend to modify the sentiment in favour of union, which is by no means absolute. In fact, we have seen it vary according to the relative strength of Austria and Germany. It was strong in 1922, when the value of the Austrian crown fell to its lowest point, whilst

[1] *Zahlungsbilanz und Lebensfähigkeit Oesterreichs* (Duncker and Humblot, Munich), etc.

the mark was still hesitating on the edge of the abyss, and weak in 1923, when the Austrian currency had been stabilized, and Germany was experiencing the ruinous effect of inflation in her turn. It has been strong again since 1925, for the financial recovery seems more likely to be permanent, and the future prospects are better in Berlin than in Vienna. We can turn this "relativism" to account. We can modify the conditions which make union seem desirable by favouring the concession of customs facilities to Austria, and we can teach her to recognize its true nature. Has not the desire for it been stimulated to a great extent by its interdiction, and the difficulties in the way of carrying it into effect? As something forbidden it had a fascination, and as something Utopian it seemed safe to demand it. The "*Mitteleuropa*" visualized by the Imperialists was given a democratic character, and aggrandizement was looked forward to as a release. (This was how the German Socialist support was gained for Germany's colonial policy.) A majority exists today to *vote* for the union, but not to *enforce* it, and public enthusiasm for it in Austria would soon cool, if, instead of picturing it as something idyllic, the people could be clearly shown that in reality it would mean German predominance, a menace of occupation or of war. A desire to abdicate is not an irresistible moral force. The advantages of equality can be set against those of surrendering on easy terms, the duty of being independent against the

right to self-determination, particularist ambition against Pan-German patriotism. There is an excellent chance for diplomacy.

From the point of view of Franco-German relations, the fact that the advantage of the union is disputed in Berlin, and its danger in Paris, is in itself a cardinal element of conciliation. The Nationalists in the Reichstag fear that the effect on German domestic policy might be to shift the Parliamentary balance to the advantage of the Centre and Socialist Parties, and a certain number of French people who share that opinion, think that the annexation would commit Germany definitely to a path of peace. Their point of view seems to us open to question. Would the numerical preponderance of the Left elements balance the increased power Germany would acquire? Would the Austrian element preserve its distinctive character in the dynamic force of the new State? No one can guarantee that, and the history of the relations between Germany and Austria entitles us to doubt it. In any case, however, the union within the framework of the policy we have outlined would no longer have the same significance from the French point of view, for it would augment allied instead of enemy strength. It is true that the successes of an ally may themselves be dangerous, if they destroy the original balance of power between the allies. Moreover, we do not believe that because a Franco-German *rapprochement* would

make the union far less disquieting, it would therefore make it desirable. There would be no reason why we should champion it. On the contrary, it would still be our duty as friends, just as it was our business as victors, to point out to Germany the danger of embarking upon it, and advise her not to make any attempt to do so in the near future. But we could get others to pronounce a veto which the German Nationalists have hitherto attributed to French hostility. It is in the common interest that the question of union should not be raised until the disputes which directly concern the great Rhineland Powers have been settled and real progress has been made in the direction of European free trade. If both sides are content to wait, without making tiresome claims, or imposing harsh prohibitions, the union may some day seem like nothing more than a particular instance of a general formula. It would no longer menace the balance of power, for Europe would have outgrown this idea of balance, and, having attained the object, we might even give up the term. To dismiss the idea of union between Austria and Germany for ever would merely provoke its accomplishment in the near future. A time would then inevitably come when the union could neither be impeached nor punished. It could not be impeached if it had been accomplished through progressive identification of legislation nor could any penalty be inflicted if it had been effected by a *coup de force*, for, under the

Locarno régime we have described, the veto of one Power would suffice to prevent its suppression by military force.

THE FRANCO-POLISH ALLIANCE

The question of the eastern frontiers is far more serious. We are Poland's allies, and no French Government worthy of the name would think of repudiating our engagements. This is exactly why we consider a policy dangerous which neither seeks to limit the causes of conflict, nor to insure the technical execution of the assistance promised. The latter could not be effectively given without a French offensive in Germany. Who would venture to claim that our military system and our foreign policy are in accordance with this hypothesis? The theory of war which tends to prevail in the French Parliament is purely defensive. On the other hand, the Locarno treaties have provided different guarantees for the protection of the eastern and western frontiers, which may counteract one another. In the case of an obscure conflict in the East, we should be exposed to the risk of finding the League of Nations divided, of our guarantors abandoning, or even siding against us, and of the neutralized zone we so much wanted becoming a trap in which we should figure as the aggressors. In the same circumstances, the logical inconsistency we have pointed out from the beginning of this book, between unilateral alliances and the universality of the League of Nations,

would give rise to serious legal difficulties. Suppose, for instance, that an invasion of Poland were to find the Council divided, and that we wished to go to her assistance, in fulfilment of our engagements. The Covenant obliges every Power, which is not acting as a mandatory of the Council, to try methods of conciliation before resorting to armed force. It may therefore be maintained that we ought to have taken part in the Germano-Polish quarrel from the beginning, and then (as has been admitted in the case of the Locarno guarantors) have lost our right to defend Poland in the Council, or else have subjected our intervention to the delay of fresh proceedings. Poland might thus be condemned by the unanimous decision of the members of the Council, owing to our absence, or be deprived of all effective military help during the initial operations, on account of our failure to come to her rescue. But there is no need to consider these hypotheses, for Germany will no doubt have a very much simpler resource at her disposal some day; she might induce Russia (or Lithuania) to attack Poland, after having organized a Polish provocation herself; then prevent a unanimous designation of the aggressor by her own veto, consequently preventing France from intervening, and finally receive her gratuity at the end of the conflict. It would be dangerous for our Polish friends to rely on their conquests and disregard these disquieting hypotheses. The strength and wealth of a country are not determined by its territorial limits

alone; the relation between its defensive capacity and the cupidity of its neighbours must also be measured, a somewhat difficult task. Now Polish territory is at present only secured by a very poor guarantee, which burdens her future and already diminishes her efficiency. Her leaders ought to make it their aim to bring about a situation in which the country would be less menaced and its alliances more effective. Happily, there is plenty of time for reflection on both sides. It will be a long time before the German Government is strong enough to be able to raise territorial questions single-handed, and the "Russian danger" is as yet nothing more than German bluff. Before it takes definite shape, we are entitled to count on a period of calm in which reason may gradually gain the upper hand.

The Quai D'Orsay ought to take advantage of it to fix the basis of the Franco-Polish alliance in the Geneva spirit. Hitherto it has been very clearly the instrument of an anti-German policy. Territories to which those best qualified to speak for Poland made no formal claim, have been assigned to her in order to perpetuate hostility between her and Germany and Russia. The Dantzig Corridor and Upper Silesia were alloted to her on contradictory principles, both working against Germany, and involving the establishment of an important German minority in Poland. Thus, during the unfortunate years when Clemenceau and the *Bloc National* were in power, everything was done to paralyze the Locarno policy in

advance. From a purely logical point of view, the signature of the Pact in 1925 involved previous revision of the intervenient provisions. On the German side, it would perhaps have been more honest to demand it. On the side of the Allies, it would perhaps have been wiser to propose it, in order to secure an absolute territorial guarantee in exchange. The easiest solution, and the one adopted, was an Arbitration Treaty without formal recognition of the *status quo*. It will also be the happiest solution if time works for the Conservatives, as the Allied Locarno delegates believed it would. But in any case, the essential task still remains. It consists in gradually absorbing the private alliances into the League of Nations. It is to be hoped that a great diplomatic adjustment, simultaneously transforming the Franco-Polish and Russo-German agreements, may some day put an end to their reciprocal menaces. The Berlin Treaty has been concluded for five years. At the expiration of that period, will the agreement ripen into an alliance, or will Germany refuse to renew it, and on what terms? If Poland were led to make concessions in order to secure it, it would seem to us only right that Germany should indemnify her by a territorial guarantee, given even against Russia, so as to preclude the German Government from seeking fresh advantages by indirect means, and extended to the neighbouring Powers, so that the modifications agreed upon should not serve as an encouragement to the Nationalists and preface a gen-

eral revision of the Treaty. The general organization of peace could thus be completed whilst at the same time the traces of the war would be gradually obliterated. Moreover, we share the hope of all Poland's friends that she may not be called upon to make any serious sacrifice. That is possible, but it will depend chiefly on herself, on the international position she succeeds in acquiring, on her intrinsic strength, and the sympathies of those surrounding her. If she is wise and clever enough to effect a political and economic *rapprochement* with Germany before raising territorial questions, the latter may be postponed indefinitely, or settled by compromise, to the general satisfaction. These are hypotheses of the future, on which it would be presumptuous to pronounce any opinion today.

But whatever the variations in the international situation may be, the Franco-Polish alliance ought always to be interpreted in the spirit we have defined—not as a partial revival of the former alliances, but as a simple fulfilment of the general obligation we have incurred towards all the members of the League of Nations, in the Versailles Covenant. It is natural that we should pay special attention to Polish events, because of our traditional sympathy with that country, and also because it is perhaps there that the cardinal principle of the League—that modifications of the *status quo* shall no longer be subject to the chances of violence—may have to be defended for the first time. But it would be

folly to propose strengthening our territorial guarantees by closer solidarity with the Warsaw Government. In our opinion, all the efforts made during the last few years, at Geneva or elsewhere, to sanction the *status quo* without previous agreement with Germany, were doubly prejudicial to our interests. They not only pledged us still further to a questionable and unstable distribution of territory, but also divided us from England, who lost the possibility of guaranteeing us alone, and would not guarantee Poland as well. This, however, is what it was agreed to describe as seeking French security! Those who all but committed us to this mistaken course, forgot the lessons of history. For long past our eastern alliances have not allowed of real reciprocity. There is fortunately nothing in the West corresponding to the permanent danger of war kept up in the East of Europe by the instability of the Governments, the uncertainty of the frontiers, and the intermixed populations. This disparity had already been admitted before the Great War. As we pointed out in *La Victorie,* the Dual Alliance was almost bound to work to the advantage of Russia, after the adjustment of the Moroccan question in 1911. But her strength—or rather the strength she derived from our support—gave us at least an excuse for resigning. Now that atonement has been made for the spoliation of 1871, this, combined with the institution of a neutral zone and the guarantees publicly given, makes the chances of a direct conflict between France and Germany much

more limited. We need not therefore hope for a Polish intervention on our behalf, which, moreover, would be very much less effective than the help we promise her, with a good deal of apparent truth. Every system of security resembles an Insurance Society, in which the premium must be fixed in proportion to the risk, under penalty of bankruptcy. After the many sacrifices we have made, we are happy within our recovered frontiers, but weary, and are entitled to claim a place amongst the beneficiaries, and not amongst the dupes.

How is a policy to be founded on these principles? At the present moment, it is not difficult; we can indulge in the luxury of continuing our Protectorate. Until when? The limit will clearly be reached when the course diplomacy has pursued since the war arrives at a certain point. Theoretically the members of the League of Nations all have equal duties in case of aggression; but there is a tendency (indicated by the Locarno system) to establish a distinction in practice between certain Powers whose guarantee is general, such as France, and others whose guarantee is limited, such as England. In reality, we have consented to go beyond the vague engagements of the Covenant, for the benefit of Poland, whilst our Anglo-Saxon allies have refused even to confirm them. We shall accept our risk, so long as no serious test intervenes to make this distinction clear; but if Poland were to become aggressive, or Germany were

reconstituted, it might change into dissociation. We should then have to consider the position seriously. Here as elsewhere, anxiety to maintain the *Entente Cordiale* will coincide with reason and peace.

FRANCO-GERMAN DISARMAMENT

If we consider the preceding questions settled, and moral disarmament consequently achieved, material disarmament is no longer of more than secondary importance. If France and Germany are not to fight one another any more, and are, on the contrary, to join in fighting other adversaries for the protection of the League of Nations, the programme of national defence becomes for them a common programme, and no longer concerns their common frontier. Danger eliminated, help assured! A double economy! Division of work would succeed rivalry, and the new problem of security would resolve itself into a question of what the minimum cost would be to the Franco-German group of insuring its collective defence. Under these conditions, public opinion would certainly insist on a considerable reduction of expenditure. Not necessarily a proportionate reduction. In this, as in other domains, a certain reversion to equality is no doubt inevitable. Moreover, far from being a sure sign of a desire for *revanche,* the effort Germany is making to recover is sufficiently explained by anxiety to restore the diplomatic equality which is

nothing more than a fiction without military equality. The contrast between the German "police army" and the French "sanctions army," which has existed for the last few years, could not therefore be perpetuated in the new atmosphere of conciliation. But why should the two countries necessarily assimilate their systems? Undoubtedly, Wilsonian logic necessitates the form of disarmament being extended to the victors which was judged proper for the vanquished nations; once more, in trying to punish our enemies, we shall have provided them with an excellent weapon for propaganda. As a matter of fact, certain rules laid down for German disarmament are capable of being generalized. Equality in the matter of control has already been established, except in so far as the special case of the demilitarized zone is concerned. But, on other points, we are justified in appealing to a difference in the existing conditions. It may be thought that the German system represents the best form of modern European army. On the other hand, it may be thought that conscription is a necessity for our country, in view of its colonial obligations. Be that as it may, if the path of *rapprochement* is sincerely pursued, the old question of proportionate land forces may very likely disappear from the international controversy, being superseded by an enquiry into the general proportion of forces on land and sea, and when that time comes, we shall not be indifferent to Germany's support.

THE COLONIAL PROBLEM

WHAT we have said about the colonial problem in respect of Italy, seems to us applicable to Germany. The mandates she might be given would not be much help to her economy or her population. There are nevertheless two distinct considerations occupying the German mind, which account for the agitation kept up with regard to this; the one is of an economic nature, which cannot be met by annexation, but might, on the other hand, be met by *ententes* respecting the sovereignties established; the other is of a moral nature, concerning the fitness of the vanquished nations to receive colonial mandates. Is Germany an inferior nation, unworthy to represent civilization amongst the negroes? This question, like that of disarmament, is merely the question of responsibility for the war in another form.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE WAR

WHO is responsible for the Great War? It is a question which attracts the simple-minded, and they enjoy discussing it on both sides of the Rhine.

In France people now avoid reaffirming the simple verdict of 1919 in its unadulterated form. It is admitted that the German people could not be saddled indefinitely with the wrong done by their leaders; that even the falsehoods told by the latter testify to the repugnance felt by the nation to an offensive war; that Republican Ger-

many's perseverance in repudiating the accusation of responsibility is perhaps less a sign of persistent duplicity than of obstinate conviction. M. Poincaré himself has retreated from one theory to another; from Allied innocence to French innocence; from premeditation to impulse; from "the eternal Germany" to "the two Germanys." He now bases Germany's responsibility on the fact of her having declared war (without seeing that he thus makes France responsible for the war of 1870, or remembering that he himself had decided to take the initiative in that respect in 1914, if Germany did not forestall him), and her having violated the Belgian neutrality (without observing that he thus associates himself with the German theory, for Bethmann-Hollweg himself had considered the infringement of international law a legitimate reason for demanding reparation). But he insists on requiring Germany to recognize her misdeeds—as though this recognition could have any value, if it were not sincere; as though it could be sincere, whilst the presumed culprits are alone in having published their archives and demanded an impartial tribunal; and as though even silence on Germany's part could signify anything more than determination to fortify her international position before claiming the inevitable inquiry. There are many Frenchmen who make the same mistake.

The Germans had a better point of departure. Their adversaries, having taken up the uncompromising posi-

tion of sole guilt, made them a concession in advance, like a victory, in recognizing divided responsibility, which was so likely, in the first place, and so propitious to all the dialectical subterfuges. But this semi-rehabilitation is not always sufficient for them, and we find zealous professors claiming that their former Government was absolutely innocent, in defiance of the most obvious facts. It is true that they are only a small minority. But more enlightened Germans still delude themselves with the belief that they can establish general agreement as to the degree of responsibility. No progress can be made by exchanging diplomatic notes or making contradictory speeches. Discussion of the question in this way, in 1927, merely provokes controversy and revives bitter memories; in a word, it prolongs the war mentality, the very thing to be destroyed. The historians themselves, who have not much courage, are afraid of the apparent political responsibility with which those who inspired the Treaty have ingeniously saddled them. No rational opinion can prevail until the Versailles Treaty has been liquidated and a whole generation of personages committed to it has passed away—not only the responsible leaders of 1914 who still control French policy, but all those who have expressed themselves publicly on the subject, and who are guaranteed by Article 231 against any offence to their *amour-propre*. Moreover, we must expect to find a few obstacles in the way of conciliation at first.

THE SOLUTION DOES NOT EXIST

We do not even believe that, sincerity being restored, a Committee of impartial experts could ever give a decisive opinion on this subject. If these experts were assembled, their verdict would be determined by the form of the interrogations addressed to them, and it would then be seen that the questions are the real subject of discussion, not the answers. If they were too far-reaching, or too plain, it is very likely that the historians would be unable to agree, and that they would even be divided exactly in accordance with their nationalities. In reality, a unanimous decision assumes a definition of peace, a computation of political and moral values, which must inevitably include subjective elements.

If an attempt were made to determine the remote causes of the war, from what point would the inquiry start, and how far would it go back? Amongst men of the same education, its limits might be fixed by a certain political instinct, but there is no recognized standard which could compel minds formed by other habits and customs to observe this limitation. Would the Austrian ultimatum be considered without regard to the Serbian provocation, or, inversely, Isvolsky's aggressive policy without taking the annexation of Bosnia into account? And by what political philosophy would the choice of facts be inspired? Those whose conception of peace is static would regard the Governments which aimed at

modifying the *status quo* as disturbers of the peace. Those whose conception of it is dynamic, would be more inclined to blame the Governments whose idea was to immobilize the world, without taking new forces into account. Certain aspects of the debate are connected with metaphysical questions which are eternal. This is why there may be different opinions as to the legitimacy of preventive war, according to the idea formed of its necessity.

If the experts were to fall back on an inquiry into the immediate causes of the war, what would be considered the precise act which made the slaughter inevitable? Would precedence be given to material or to moral considerations? The Germans justify their declaration of war by the Russian mobilization, but the Russians reply that the mobilization was necessitated by Germany's negative or dilatory attitude towards Grey's proposal of a Conference. Moreover, responsibilities can only be judged in relation to intentions. To credit the Governments of 1914 with having wished for war at any price would be fantastic. They were far too much afraid of decisions! Those which have been accused of bellicose intentions merely trusted to the technical necessities which left them practically no choice. In addition to that, a more courageous policy might have entailed other dangers. For instance, had England adopted a more resolute attitude, it might have acted as a deterrent to the belligerents, but it might also have

caused a division of British opinion when the time came for action. Besides that, the war was really decided upon before people clearly realized it.

If an attempt were made to designate the criminals, who would be selected? William II? A man in a highly responsible position, who is absolutely typical of the irresponsible criminal. Poincaré? An even more deceptive case. Every one knows that, rightly or wrongly, Isvolsky spread an idea in his own country that the French President was more inclined than his predecessors to support the projects of Russian Imperialism, and that this idea reacted on Russian policy and indirectly on German policy. There can be no possible doubt as to the connection between this initial fact and the fact of the declaration of war, but if it is a question of forming an opinion as to the Russian Ambassador's good faith or the correctness of his impressions, or as to Poincaré's intentions, there might be several different ways of looking at it. Advantage will be taken in opposite senses. M. Poincaré's utterances expressing, as its faithful representative, the pacific spirit of the country, and those indicating his personal, specific wishes. Some will credit him with having wished for war, relying on the falsifications which have been disclosed and the omissions still existing in the Yellow Book. They will say, this time supported by indisputable proofs, that in 1923 Poincaré isolated us politically by occupying the

Ruhr, on the pretext of its being to our financial advantage, and they will look for reflection of this duplicity in the pre-war secret diplomacy. Others will protest, on the ground of his legal rectitude, his strong sense of duty, and his fear of responsibility. Others again, probing a little further into his psychology, will say that his cautiousness is less due to fear of the actual consequences of action than of the criticism it may evoke from his adversaries, and that, provided he can shelter himself behind a legal instrument or a vote, his sense of duty is always easily satisfied. They will add that a certain professional obliquity may dull moral sense. Doubts are shelved in the excitement of pleading a cause. Poincaré began by thinking that victory justified everything, and then, when it disappointed the Nationalist hopes he had roused, he found himself violently attacked and was too much engrossed in defending himself to have time to examine his conscience. It was essential to convince, and in order to convince it was necessary to be convinced. In this way one becomes innocent. There are many legitimate hypotheses on which each will form his own opinion of the history of the past. Counsel for the defence, forced to admit that their client adopted a provocative attitude on several occasions, will explain that it was in the secret hope of intimidating the adversary. They will plead miscalculation as opposed to bellicosity, and there will even now be

found honest citizens who still claim that intransigence was the only means of delaying the German aggression for a time.

We, for our part, have chosen between these hypotheses; [1] but we wished to present them impartially here, in order to demonstrate the difficulty in agreeing, and put the reader on his guard against certain generous illusions. Those who know the difficulty by experience, know that not everyone can be expected to accept the moral judgment of a Committee of Experts, however worthy of respect it may be. At the end of our study in 1924, we thought it possible to establish a difference between French and German responsibility, to the disadvantage of the latter, considering Germany's predominance in Europe, and the passive support given by the German people to the Imperial Government's obviously perilous policy. Responsibility for inertia; responsibility for their rejection of responsibility, which, as far as we can see, has no equivalent in France, for it does not seem to us that any discredit attaches to the French people for wrong done by Poincaré under cover of secret diplomacy. We admit that this opinion may have been

[1] *La Victoire* (N. R. F.) [English translation, *The Limitations of Victory* (Allen and Unwin). Tr.] We have nothing to add to this book, and we shall not reply here to the strangely personal arguments employed by M. Poincaré to refute it. The former head of the State is welcome to mix up history with controversy. We propose to respect the distinction. The curious reader can refer to the *Revue d'Europe* (April 15, 1926) in which we have pointed out some of our antagonist's many mistakes and omissions.

biassed by patriotic prejudices, or even more by unconscious habit of thought, in spite of our effort to be objective. But these are risks inseparable from certain intellectual possibilities. For the rest, we should be loath to accept the verdict of a scientific expert who might declare that the culprits were equally guilty. The highest questions are decided by individual feeling, not by tribunals of experts.

THE HISTORIANS' DOMAIN

We are nevertheless of opinion that the historical inquiry should be attempted, but we should like its object to be limited. It ought not to call in question the absolute right of each nation to take an independent view of the meaning of its own history, and to base its policy on this interpretation. Our idea is that it should confine itself to formulating a certain number of definite facts, and establishing an international concensus of opinion with regard to them. This work might be extended, in proportion to the degree in which the process of pacification enlarged the domain of the inquiry. At first, for instance, it would be a question of determining the date and character of the mobilizations in July 1924, and the true history of the final proposals of conciliation. Such a work would not lead to any discoveries, for all serious historians are already agreed on these points. But the announcement that they were officially collaborating, and the fact of a common text

being drafted, would make this agreement obvious and public. As the recorded facts would be favourable first to one side and then to the other, the Nationalists on both sides would no doubt continue to shout victory, by adapting their theories a little. But what matter? All propaganda work is essentially addressed to the mass of unprejudiced minds that are undecided. Many of them would change their present opinion if they became aware of certain facts. How many French people, for instance, know that the German request that Toul and Verdun should be surrendered, on the 30th of July 1914, was made at a moment when France had already decided to take up arms, and only in order to compel her to show her hand without further delay; or that the Russian mobilization had been considered inseparable from aggression in the Franco-Russian military conversations? It is to be hoped that public opinion may be enlightened on these as well as on many other points. When this work of education has been accomplished, no doubt a writer of M. Bainville's standing will not be found reversing the order of the mobilizations in a history of France of which a hundred thousand copies have been printed. More subtle divergences from the truth might still remain, but they would do no harm, for, to our mind, it is less essential to insist on this or that solution of the question than to bring about recognition of its complexity, and substitute a spirit of inquiry for the spirit of revenge. Our wish is that the movement should be

spontaneous; that the demand for publication of the archives should be made in France itself; that the historians should endeavour to turn and mine certain sentimental positions, by an historical sapping process, which they would merely consolidate by making a frontal attack on them. Atonement loses its full value if it is not voluntarily made. Are we willing that in such a grave moral question, the signal for evolution should be given by the foreigner, as was done in the case both of our foreign and our financial policy?

We hope, above all, that the intellectual reform may come about in time to influence our action. The difficulty is that we must at one and the same time postpone international discussion, which is irritating and useless, and encourage a discussion in our own country, which would dispose of many pernicious prejudices. No doubt there are special dispensations for which to be thankful; many people find fault with the former alliances and at the same time believe that the German action was premeditated; they approve both of the Locarno system, which gives mutual protection to equals, and of Article 231 of the Versailles Treaty, which divides sheep from goats. A few essential lessons are thus learned from a great catastrophe by some mysterious intuition, before reason has fathomed its causes, and this is most fortunate. But in other ways the war propaganda still poisons the political atmosphere. The reader will see in the next chapter how it perverts the question of inter-

national debts, to our disadvantage, and will then be better able to understand the burning present interest of the questions we have just touched upon. That they should be eliminated from politics, and entrusted to the calm judgment of the future, is our earnest desire, but those who most willingly support this view only turn it to account to avoid too rapid a revision of their original verdict, without postponing its present consequences. They admit that the theory is not final, but retain its corollaries. That is nothing but cowardice and inertia.

ENGLAND AS A THIRD

FROM this brief survey it will be seen that none of the questions which might again imperil the Rhineland frontier seem to us politically insoluble. If we are prepared to pay the price, we can therefore boldly rely upon German collaboration. It is true that this is often represented as being fraught with danger to us. We hear people say: "Nothing will satisfy Germany. In trying to pacify her, we only increase her avidity. If some of her eastern claims are conceded, she will devise others, and finally make the Western claims which she is holding in reserve today. The Bohemian Germans would be claimed after the Austrian Germans, and Alsace-Lorraine after the Dantzig Corridor." That prophecy might be verified if our foreign policy were only based on reconciliation with Germany, but by carrying on the conversations *à trois* which led to the Locarno understanding, we are

sure of being able to prevent any recrudescence of German militarism. In fact, if the *status quo* in the West, or the general order in Europe were menaced, Great Britain's decision would be given in favour of France. The great advantage of the Rhineland Treaty is that in any case it will act as a lever in European affairs; it will be a treaty guaranteeing both parties as long as the spirit of conciliation prevails, and an Anglo-French defensive treaty if Germany is disloyal to it. Thus, if the Berlin Government were to dream of hegemony, and pursue that aim instead of defending its vital interests, not only would its policy in Germany itself be bitterly opposed, but it would be faced with renewed British hostility, and the experience of 1914 has taught the Germans to fear this hostility above all. Nor must it be forgotten that the operation of the League encourages both this division of German opinion and the Francophil tendency of British opinion. We should be no better able to do without England's support in any of the other problems with which we have to deal. She alone can protect us effectively against Italian hostility; her initiative alone could avail to secure a general revision of the debts. Whatever dispute may arise, the Anglo-French *entente* will be the surest guarantee of a peaceful settlement. The mistake we have made in the past has been in asking for what she could not give. Having surrendered all control of the Dominions, and established her new Empire on a basis of voluntary collaboration, the British

Government has necessarily had to pursue a policy of general Imperial interest which could not be interpreted by the oppression and encirclement of Germany. Hence the rupture of 1923. Now as then, anxiety not to put British solidarity to tests which might wreck it dominates all other considerations in Downing Street. Moreover, contrary to a widespread opinion, fear of possible Franco-German ascendancy does not outweigh the satisfaction of seeing the greatest danger of war dispelled, and the risk of having to intervene consequently diminished. The Locarno reconciliation is indeed the indispensable condition for England's European policy. It is only natural that the British Government should not be able to see eye to eye with us in all the developments of this reconciliation. The territorial problems are not so serious for England as for us, and our assets are more realizable than hers. Her industries, handicapped by bad organization, diminished output, and restricted markets, are not at present inclined to join continental combinations which are being formed, and in which they would be at a disadvantage. Preference is given to Imperial combinations, for reasons which combine political interest with indolence. But it would be foolish to profit by this abstention to give the groups which may be formed a tendency to hostility towards her. The common memories of the war, the loyalty and power of the British Government, the dangers of a *tête-à-tête* from which she would be excluded—everything, in fact, points

to the advisability of continuing to make a friendship which is in consonance with the wishes of both nations, a main plank in our policy; and, in our opinion, one of the great merits of the programme we are trying to formulate is that it gives this policy its best chance of success.

V

THE DEBTS AS A LEVER

THIS is how the Locarno treaties may affect the future. The immediate repercussions have been much more modest. The situation has been dominated by a psychological fact. In spite of the reserve shown by the delegates, their cautious reticence, and their endeavour to give most prominence to the least important part of their work, and in spite of the development of pacifist feeling in Europe since 1924, public opinion had not been prepared for the extent of the agreement reached; it had to be given time to fall in with it. The German plenipotentiaries themselves had not expected to sign a treaty when they left for Locarno, and had not carried on the necessary campaign of propaganda. As to the French people, they thought that they were sending their plenipotentiaries to receive fresh confirmation of the Versailles Treaty. Both sides concealed the true meaning of the agreement, leaving a vague and blissful confidence to develop, in the hope that when once people had become accustomed to security, it would not be called in question again, only—as we have shown—the agreement was not complete in itself, and consequently the silence could not be maintained. It was for the victors to state their views first. M. Briand had his

own, but he was waiting for a propitious moment to express them.

THOIRY

During the first half of 1926, public attention in France was distracted from foreign affairs, and absorbed in the financial crisis. This not only gave the Minister for Foreign Affairs a freer hand, but it was a natural temptation to the whole Government, whatever Party might be in office, to adopt any proposal likely to be pecuniarily advantageous, even at the cost of a few sacrifices. Here the Ministerial conservative instinct accorded with a correct view of the relative urgency of the problems; in the case of nations whose currency is menaced, external prestige and the hope of financial recovery are inseparable. On the other hand, everyone who understood the matter, realized that the occupation of the Rhineland, already reduced, and limited by the Treaty to fifteen years, did not constitute a permanent basis for the organization of peace; it was merely an asset whose value must diminish as the time approached for the expiration of the occupation. It could, however, surely be turned to account as a means of disposing of two anxieties simultaneously, our military advantages and our financial difficulties? Thus it was that the idea of exchanging an earlier evacuation of the Rhineland for an earlier mobilization of the Reparation obliga-

tions occurred to M.M. Briand and Stresemann when they lunched together at Thoiry.

But it almost immediately became evident that Franco-German co-operation would not suffice to settle the question. Mobilization involved borrowing, borrowing involved American help, and American help involved ratification of the Mellon-Béranger agreement. All the problems are therefore dominated by the one which is far from being solved, and in which Germany is not directly interested. Some critics go farther, and maintain that even after a settlement of the debts, mobilization of the Reparation obligations would not depend on the German Government. We shall not go as far as that. It is quite true that, according to the terms of the Dawes scheme, no one but the "trustee" authorized by the Reparation Commission, is entitled to place the securities on the market which have already been assigned to him by the German Reich. But this is pure theory. Is it to be supposed that the eventual lenders would fail to take Germany's wishes into consideration? Is it likely that they would not be encouraged by her voluntary renunciation of the transfer clause? Besides that, would not her consent be indispensable to enable the loan to be paid in dollars, seeing that the Dawes scheme provides for its payment in marks? If recourse were to be had to loans, it would therefore be necessary to negotiate with the German Government. But the ad-

vantage is what really seems to us doubtful. In reality, the issue of part of the Reparation obligations with certain privileged rights would probably depreciate the value of our remaining claim. Germany would feel warranted in emphasizing the difficulty in making the ulterior payments, and would claim a receipt in full. In this she would probably be supported by the American financiers, who seem opposed to the idea of partial mobilization. Consequently, any anticipation of the payments would involve a revision of the scheme before the time when it could be combined with a general revision of the debts. Not only that, but we should incur a serious loss in respect of our theoretical claim, owing to the rate of interest the lenders would demand. Finally, any sum realized through American help, at the present time, would probably be diverted to the advantage of the United States, either directly, by attaching it in some way, or by the indirect method of putting a higher estimate on France's capacity to pay. International loans might have been advantageous some years ago, under other psychological and financial conditions. They may be so again when the debts and reparations have been definitely fixed, but, as regards this, we live in a thankless age.

Consequently, we can understand that those who attach great value to the occupation of the Rhineland hesitate to abandon it in return for such a doubtful advantage. But what could they secure in its place?

Can any other means of accelerating a settlement of the international debts be imagined? It has been suggested that Germany should take over our debt to the United States, but in the first place, this project would be vetoed by the Washington Government; that she should increase her payments in kind—but there would be the strongest opposition to this in France itself; that she should be responsible for the difference between the rates of interest on her debt and those which actually mortgage the international loans—but this apparent increase in the yield of the Dawes scheme would be pure hypocrisy, when each secretly looks upon it as a maximum, probably destined to be partially revised.[1]

If political advantages are sought, what would they be? Fresh progress in the direction of disarmament? We have already said what we thought of this chimera, and will not lay stress on it, for all sensible people now recognize, as we do, that the surest elements of a nation's strength are, by definition, beyond international control. To ask Germany to agree to total disarmament would, as M. Henry Jouvenel said, be asking her "to sacrifice both her riches and her virtues." Confirmation of the engagements entered into by Germany at

[1] It must be remembered that the Dawes scheme, like the Rhineland Treaty of Locarno, has effectively dispelled certain diplomatic chimeras, without settling any essential question. Both are merely outlines to be filled in. In particular, the development of the Dawes scheme, after the expiration of the moratorium, depends mainly on certain trade conditions which do not seem to have been given much consideration hitherto. That is to say that its yield is very contingent on circumstances.

Locarno? Re-editing them would merely weaken them. A doubt would be cast on their initial value, and this would be an encouragement to Germany to sell us a ratification each year, in consideration of fresh advantages, whilst its value would be gradually diminishing. An extension of these engagements? German public opinion is unanimously hostile to this, and, moreover, what would be gained by insisting upon it? No treaty could deprive Germany of the right pertaining to every member of the League of Nations to call its attention to territorial provisions which have become dangerous, nor Austria of the right to secure the authorization of her union with Germany through the unanimous approval of the Council. Consequently, no matter what provisions might be made, Dantzig and the "*Anschluss*" would still be on the agenda.

THE VALUE OF THE RHINELAND

THE strange truth is that there is nothing which it is essential for us to ask. In one sense this is an encouraging fact, for if France has so much difficulty in finding German sacrifices that would be a counterpart to the advantages she herself could concede, it is no doubt because the two countries have more common than rival interests. But this equally suggests that if the evacuation would benefit us so little, the occupation cannot be of any great value, and, as a matter of fact, we must clearly recognize that it will come to an end at the very moment

when Germany's recovery will enable her to contemplate schemes of retaliation. Until then, the vanquished nation can have no interest in embarking on an adventure which would compromise the progress we are allowing her to make by peaceful methods. Not only that, but why should the Locarno agreements have been voted if they were not to secure even eight years of tranquillity? In approving them, the majority of the French Parliament implied its opinion of the Rhineland occupation. . . . To our mind, the evacuation would be an advantage in itself. An advantage from the material point of view, because we should benefit by the difference between the cost of keeping the troops in France and the higher cost of keeping them in the Rhineland, which is at present charged on the invariable total sum for Reparations fixed by the Dawes scheme. It would also be a moral advantage, for in choosing a date for the evacuation, we should be making a virtue of what would soon become a necessity. The psychological repercussions would be happy both in France and Germany. Our policy today is lulled to sleep by the Treaty. Protected by a fictitious frontier, we are forgetting to organize a real frontier. A provisional guarantee saves us the necessity of inquiring into the permanent guarantee a durable *rapprochement* might afford us. Unconsciously the nation is adopting a subtle and pernicious argument— "To be secure against the Germans, we must occupy their territory; since we occupy their territory, it must be

because they are our enemies; because they are our enemies, we cannot collaborate with them." If we go on repeating this mischievous syllogism, the next generation will find themselves deprived both of the occupation and the *rapprochement*, and will blame us for their anxieties.

Undoubtedly there is a sentimental desire in Germany to expedite the liberation of their territory, and we may yet be able to exploit this desire; but we could not expect Germany to modify the permanent trend of her policy in exchange for a temporary right. The utmost we can hope is that if we can combine earlier evacuation with general fixation of the debts, the amount due to us may be more easily mobilized, and that a military control of the Rhinelands may be organized by the League of Nations. These would be concessions to public opinion rather than material advantages, for not only would Germany be as much interested in paying off a reduced debt as we ourselves, but she might, on the other hand, be tempted to start a general international agitation by demanding in the future that the special measures of control we should oblige her to accept—measures which would not be of much value, seeing that the danger of a direct attack is almost nil—should be generalized. The real advantage of the transaction would be simply the creation of a new atmosphere, favourable to the great work of economic *rapprochement* of which we shall speak later on. In order to complete the general

liquidation of the Franco-German difficulties, which alone can provide a solid basis for collaboration, it would also be necessary to settle the Saar question. That ought to be easy, for it would be in our interest to forestall a plebiscite, the result of which would certainly be unfavourable to us. From that time, the Saar question would be reduced to a question of customs (a market for the Lorraine industries) and finance (repurchase of the mines), which could be treated in accordance with the general principles we formulate elsewhere.

At the end of this analysis, the Thoiry expedient appears more like an opportune association of two simultaneous, but not interdependent considerations than anything else. The psychological calculation which alone could justify it proved to be mistaken. As a matter of fact, the Germans consider that the premature evacuation of the Rhineland ought to be a direct repercussion of the Locarno agreements, not compensation for fresh concessions, and their logical position is very strong. Moreover, it was said in Berlin that the French were offering what they had already virtually conceded, whilst in Paris the German debtor was accused of "gambling with the United States claims," and the effort to bring about a *rapprochement* simply resulted in a reaction against the idea of it. The proper course would be to replace this artificial "union" by the logical association which, on the one hand, connects the Rhineland occupation with Franco-German reconciliation, and, on the

other, the execution of the Dawes scheme with a settlement of the inter-Allied debts.

REPARATION AND THE INTER-ALLIED DEBTS

EVERY one admits that there is necessarily a relation between Reparation and the inter-Allied debts, and our statesmen are generally accused of not having understood how to turn it to account. They are said to have had several opportunities of stipulating that our payments to America and England should only be made after the complete restoration of the devastated areas, and out of the balance of our claim on Germany. In reality, this theory depended for its success on two conditions, American generosity, and recognition of France's poverty, which have indeed existed successively, but never simultaneously. During the first period, the brotherhood in arms and the ideology of the war were still sufficiently living forces for the United States to have been disposed to grant us privileges; but it was just the time when our Governments enjoyed practically unlimited credit at the expense of Germany. They had "pledged the victory." They maintained that all the money required to repair the damage done (estimated at a rate which would enable them at the same time to recover part of the cost of the war) and to pay our debts to our Allies as well, could be got out of the vanquished nations. The world had been taken in by these representations. How could the legitimate creditors have de-

liberately renounced their share of such prosperity? In 1924 we had to abandon the recoverable budget, and publish our disastrous balance sheet. We then appealed to those who had lent us money, but in the meantime, we had definitely alienated the Allied sympathy that time was already undermining, by our Ruhr policy. Yet we hear it said that in 1924 the Rhenish-Westphalian security afforded us an opportunity of securing a favourable adjustment of the debts. That is another misrepresentation of history which completes the list of the Nationalist myths. Let us define the alternative. Could we have kept our troops in the Ruhr after having given up its economic control, and until the American debt had been reduced? No. Poincaré himself had stated that our sole mission was to insure the safety of our mining engineers. All we could have done would have been to reject the Dawes scheme *en bloc*, which its authors had pronounced indivisible, and which was incompatible, in reality, with either maintenance of the Franco-Belgian administration in the Ruhr, or a veto from the American lenders on whom the initial loan essential to the success of the scheme depended. That would have precipitated a financial crisis, and *pourparlers* would soon have been reopened under less favourable circumstances. The United States could afford to wait. We could not. The question of reparation matured before the question of the debts. That is the truth.

Our experts were nevertheless able to introduce a

phrase at the end of the Dawes report which leaves us a means of establishing the connection between the two questions—debts and reparation—in the future, of which we have never hitherto been able to obtain official recognition. "Our scheme does not attempt a solution of the whole Reparation problem . . . but it is so framed as to facilitate a final and comprehensive agreement as to all the problems of reparation and connected questions. "The experts thus affirmed the fragmentary character of their work, and left the Reparation problem open until the time came to adjust the debts. Their report, ratified by the Governments, does not enable us to claim a release from our engagements, but it guarantees us against too heavy a sacrifice by leaving us an indefinite claim against Germany, and thus gives us a very good chance of getting them cancelled indirectly by interesting our creditors in the matter, and showing that it affects the prosperity of the whole of Europe, now suffering through the uncertainty of the international engagements.

Moreover, the practical ties formed by their execution will no doubt prove far more efficacious than either the moral or legal connection established between the two obligations. The analogy between the technical problems suggests in itself an analogy between the solutions. We wrote in 1922—without producing the slightest effect—that the propaganda against Germany's bad faith was dangerous, because it might some day be carried on

against France by her former allies, and, as a matter of fact, all its arguments are now being turned against us. The Dawes scheme itself established a dangerous connection between the idea of payment and the idea of control, which makes it more difficult for us to obtain guarantees on the first point without compensation. The right of commercializing the obligations, and thus transforming a public into a private debt, was inserted in the Washington Agreement as in the London Schedule of Payments. If we persist in our mistakes, and cannot decide on a continental policy and pursue it, history may some day say that the object of reparation was to secure payment of the interallied debts, without much benefit to us.

GENERAL CANCELLATION

We shall not go over the expert calculations which have been made to compare the payments respectively provided for by the Dawes scheme and the inter-allied agreements. We attach very little importance to the figures which have been given, either as regards the "present value" of the total amount of each debt, which can never be discounted, or as regards details of the future annuities, which are to be paid and transferred in accordance with political and economic circumstances which cannot be foreseen. Those are dreams, particularly dangerous because they are apparently so definite. The only certain advantage one debt can have other an-

other is the one that might have ben derived from spreading the payments over a certain time and differentiating between them. We ought to have made that our aim from the moment the armistice was concluded. A delay formally agreed to would have enabled us to recover our prosperity before having to bear the burden of our obligations; national organization of the payments in kind would have enabled us to realize profits at Germany's expense which would not have been transferable to our creditors. Reconstruction in the devastated areas without foreign co-operation did away with the best part of these possibilities. If the payments are now to be made simultaneously and in the same form, they will almost automatically counterbalance one another, whatever the proportion of the figures fixed may be. Moreover, the theoretical advantage the Dawes scheme still has over the Mellon-Béranger and Caillaux-Churchill agreements seems to us, in the long run, insignificant enough. It must also be remembered that the right the Dawes scheme gives us of continuing to draw on the budget indefinitely, is somewhat crippled, owing to the presumption created by the conditions of interest and amortization of the railways and industrial obligations, which involves their execution within thirty-seven years, as well as by M. Herriot's statements and the estimates of the different treasuries, which allow the same length of time for the whole of the German payments. It is consequently very much more in our interest to negotiate than to try to

realize them in any way that might create fresh Franco-German misunderstanding. The legitimate aim of our diplomacy should be to secure that part of the proceeds of the Reparation obligations be earmarked to pay for the final works of reconstruction, in consideration of our special position as victims of the war. As regards all the rest—the budgetary withdrawals proposed by the Dawes scheme, and the Washington and London annuities—it is advisable to pursue a policy of general cancellation, which will enable us to benefit by the considerable support we should have in the United States from German-American propaganda. It would also afford a fresh field in which to further Franco-German *rapprochement* and thus react happily on our security, and finally it would tend to stabilize currencies and commerce in Europe, and be more remunerative than payments which might upset them.

THE LEVER

PAYMENTS which might upset them? Not necessarily, some will say. The payment of a debt establishes close solidarity between the creditor and the debtor; it assumes collaboration which may benefit them both. We agree. It has even been maintained that the result of Germany taking over our debt to the United States would be to encourage trade between Germany and America in such a way as to injure us. This may be only an apparent paradox; if we thought a reduction of the

American tariffs likely, or even believed it possible for a European State to compete effectively in the American home market, we should have no objection to it; and the reader can add this argument, if he likes, to those we have adduced in favour of general cancellation. In any case, we do not fail to recognize the fact that reparations may give the initial impetus to European collaboration. The German and French people may perhaps agree to unite their efforts, the one in order to be free, the other in order to be paid, and they would then make the means the end. There is no doubt that, as we have already pointed out, the restoration of the devastated areas has deprived Germany of an important market for her exports, and our debtor does not now produce raw material for which there is any great demand in other countries. Now if she exports manufactured goods, she will compete with our industries, thus setting our economic and financial interests in opposition to one another. But there is no reason why works carried out in France or the colonies, for which Germany might supply the plant and possibly the labour, should not be put down to the Reparation account. In this way, our Empire might be developed, Europe might be independently supplied with raw material, and Germany's surplus population might be turned to account at one and the same time.

But fate has willed otherwise. The cancellation we recommend is not possible at present; the United States

are opposed to it. That being so, we are provisionally reduced to the original problem of how to give a special character to the German payments, and arrange for their being made within a shorter time than our own. We have just outlined the remaining solutions of this problem. As we are obliged to begin by insuring the execution of the Dawes scheme—under which the annuities payable in the near future are fortunately very much larger than those of the inter-Allied agreements—we can take advantage of this to prepare the ground for Franco-German collaboration. It is to be hoped that, for some years to come, the Reparation debt may fulfil its mission, which is to provide the French Government with the necessary lever to steer the economy of the country in the direction demanded by its general interest and security, and that it will then be discarded as a useless weapon. The necessity of materializing the payments will have inspired an effort of creative imagination; we must retain the discoveries and abandon the expedients.

RESPONSIBILITY AND SOLIDARITY

Thus, whether it is a question of cancelling or fulfilling international obligations, we find close solidarity between the interests of France and Germany. What is there to prevent our pursuing a joint policy in these questions? All the objections to it are based on the same historical prejudice. The legend of the causes of the war, which has its proper sphere, has invaded the other

political fields. Many French people object to the idea of one debt setting off the other, on the ground that they are not of the same moral nature. The one is regarded as a penalty inflicted to punish an international crime, the other as a debt contracted between friends, in the course of a common struggle to repress this crime. We even find experts sacrificing what their experience suggests to these ethical considerations. In his 1925 report to the Chamber of International Commerce, Sir Josiah Stamp says that in the interest of civilization and morality, it is the victor's duty to insist on asserting his rights, even though he may have to suffer for it to some extent. Therefore we must punish ourselves if necessary in order to punish! A strange political morality indeed! And yet, the idea of responsibility is quite useless as a basis for the Dawes scheme, for international solidarity is considered sufficient justification for the imposition of equal fiscal burdens on all the belligerents, and for participation of the vanquished nation in restoring the regions it devastated. The experts, of whom Sir Josiah Stamp was one, even expressly declared themselves in favour of putting a stop to the sanctions which had been applied before they met, and their whole report shows that they regarded penalty and payment as almost antithetical ideas. Is an unreasonable moral claim, which is both irritating to the vanquished nation and unnecessary, so imperative? There is no need to consult history in order to dispute it. It is sufficient to remark that the case

in question did not admit of a simple verdict, that sentence was pronounced by one of the parties to the dispute, and that the obligation was not freely accepted. Some, who would, no doubt, be only too glad if the penalties could be inflicted to the end of time, maintain that the evil-doers ought to be punished still further for having tried to evade their punishment. There is certainly no difficulty in proving Germany's bad faith during the first few years after the war, but we have no right to appeal to it, for there has been no sign of it from the moment when we gave their good will a chance, for the first time. In reality, the conditions upon which all payment of reparation depends, which were indicated by the experts who drafted the Dawes scheme, and finally approved by M. Poincaré, had never existed until then, thanks to him.

The moral issues are consequently always subverted when the problem is discussed. The experts establish the material advantages of cancelling the debts beyond all possibility of dispute, but fall back upon principles. Our leaders, feeling the weakness of their moral position, try to show that a return to the path of justice would be injurious to our interests. Since the controversy between Poincaré and Stresemann in September 1926, the latter theory has been discussed by certain French newspapers with a frankness bordering on cynicism. The tendency of their comments was to prove that it would be dangerous to raise the question of respon-

sibility for the war before the Reparation obligations had been definitely fixed, but that it might very well be examined subsequently in a new light. If that were so, the definite settlement would become singularly fraught with peril for some of the very ones on whom it depends, and it is permissible to wonder whether they really desire it in their inmost hearts.

RATIFICATION OF THE MELLON-BÉRANGER AGREEMENT

There is one more misunderstanding to be removed. Many of our readers will no doubt consider our advocacy of a Franco-German "clean slate" policy an argument against ratifying the Mellon-Béranger agreement. They will conclude that a policy of European emancipation involves a refusal to accept the "Charter of Iniquity." That is superficial logic. In our eyes, the emancipation is, on the contrary, a future end, conditional at present on an immediate ratification of the Washington undertakings.

The opponents of this ratification adduce moral arguments of two kinds against it. Those which concern the validity of the debt seem to us both futile and ill-advised. Futile, because the abatements which will be necessitated by the technical limitations of the transfer will certainly exceed those which might be justified by the argument; ill-advised, because they incline our American friends to assume that if we do not pay them, it is due to bad

faith rather than to incapacity to pay. Those who emphasize the gravity of consciously and voluntarily endorsing the agreement derive their force from our evasions. If we go on temporizing, if we try to secure, or even succeed in securing concessions, then indeed it may be said that we have concluded an advantageous bargain of our own free will. It would have been possible for us to accept the American proposals of 1926 as a fresh unreasonable demand, less onerous than that of 1917 but of the same nature, the pressure exerted by the refusal of credit during a period of financial crisis having succeeded that imposed upon us by the necessities of the war, and similarly deprived us of our liberty to discuss the matter. But we preferred plunging into the controversy again, out of superstitious respect for the written law. If Germany had been as much afraid of making promises of payment beyond her power to fulfil, our soldiers would still be in the Ruhr and the mark at zero.

It may even be maintained that the defects of the agreement of April the 29th, which are daily denounced, are just its best qualities. It provides for payments without providing for means of transfer or the possibility of investment in France; in order to facilitate them it authorizes carry-overs which can only render them still more problematical; in short, it settles nothing. The advantage of that is that it will be all the easier to call the whole agreement in question again. It must not be forgotten that the "capacity for payment," which is often

spoken of as though it were a clearly defined and measured standard, is in reality an elastic factor, whose variations are subject, on the one hand, to actual conditions which cannot be foreseen, and, on the other, to the will of the debtor. Outwardly, in fact, it depends on the general conditions of trade throughout the world and at home, on how far the debtor will consent to lower his standard of life. Now today we are free to order our trade as we like, and fix this minimum of existence which, having the first claim on the budgetary receipts, measures the margin left for other payments. That would no longer be the case if recourse were had to arbitrage—invoked for the first time by our Nationalist zealots. There are two ways in which it would work against our interests. As to the principle, the arbiters, not being authorized to give an equitable verdict without the consent of America, could only reaffirm our legal obligation. As to the methods of executing it, they would not leave us free to choose them; they would decide how we were to carry out our obligation of honour. Not being in any case in a position to carry out our foreign as well as our domestic obligations (which are no less sacred), in full, we should no longer even be able to fix the extent and proportion of this two-fold failure as we liked, and we should be unable to disregard indiscreet suggestions from our creditors or from neutral Powers with regard to economy, restrictions, and conversions. Consequently, arbitrage would subject us to control, and reduce us to a

position of slavery, without being capable of dealing with all the elements of the problem.

THE DIPLOMATIC PROBLEM

A DEMAGOGIC campaign, carried on through the medium of the French newspapers, has perverted the diplomatic problem. Ratification of the agreement does not imply any expression of opinion as to the necessity of foreign credits to restore the value of the French franc, the legitimacy of the American claims, or our ability to satisfy them. Instead of entering into these questions, let us examine the main problem. Is there any real hope of the agreement being revised before its ratification? Is there any real risk of having to execute it in full after its ratification? Would not the ratification create more favourable conditions for its revision? In short, it is a question of expediency. Now it is evident that our present attitude tends to throw all the onus on to us of a struggle for cancellation of the debts which is in the general interest. Our refusal to ratify the agreement irritates the creditor, and confirms his determination, and he singles us out from the other debtors. If, on the other hand, we were to ratify it, Germany would act solidly with us, and we could formulate a scheme for the general cancellation of debts in agreement with her, with England, Belgium, Italy, and Rumania. We should then be sure of being able to negotiate with the United States, in a few years time, on far more favourable terms. We

should be speaking on behalf of Europe, and of a reconstituted Europe. We should no longer be contending with the Debts Commission, which would have been dissolved in the meantime, and we should no longer be accused of disputing the principle of our debt. We should be discussing technical methods unlikely to rouse popular feeling . . . nothing but a gradual change in American public opinion can lead to cancellation. Now the arguments we adduce today, in which the figures are curiously seasoned with subjective, specifically European ideas, will always be met by the eternal question: "Have you received the money or not?" As long as they misjudge the problem of payment, and think their national dignity is at stake, our creditors will be unanimous.

But we can break up this unanimity by making the first payments. This will have the immediate effect of making the inter-Allied debts one of the factors dominating American domestic policy. The very moment the taxpayer, a natural supporter of payment, sees the American loans which have been issued as a counterpart to the loans to France, being gradually redeemed, and consequently begins to lose interest in full payment, the exporters will begin to fear that our competition may increase or our consumption decrease, and the bankers, (supported by their increasing clientèle of depositors) having invested capital in France after the ratification, will object to Government competition. If the Govern-

ment of the United States were to insist on the inter-Allied transfers being continued, regardless of private transfers, it would be injuring the interests of its nationals, and at the same time compromising the payment of future annuities by the general injury it would cause to French economy. Not only that, but it would paralyze American exportation, which is developing, proportionately to the credits granted. Could it go still farther, and make itself a party to its debtor's eventual default, by putting an embargo on the credits? Although it is not in accordance with any established law, this policy is accepted today, because it could be sanctioned at any moment by a legislative measure. But it is doubtful whether such a measure would be carried, in view of the solidarity of restored trade between the two countries, and the menace with regard to the payments.

Moreover, if reassurance is needed, we have only to consider the history of the past negotiations. The strictly limited mandate originally given to the American Debts Commission obliged them to refuse any reduction of the rate of interest or any extension of the payments over more than twenty-five years. This prevented their taking either moral factors or the question of capacity to pay into account. In reality, as far as capacity to pay is concerned, they have disregarded orders since the conclusion of the English agreement which laid down the principle of a maximum annuity, and have also disregarded them, as far as moral factors are concerned,

since the conclusion of the Belgian agreement, which simply cancelled the debts incurred before the armistice. Similarly, on several occasions, the American Government, whilst denying the existence of any legal connection between the debts and reparation, recognized a practical connection between the payment of reparation and France's capacity to pay. Mr. Hughes's speeches in 1922 were notable instances of this. In defending the agreement concluded with M. Béranger, which allows easier terms of payment for the first few years than those which had been contemplated during M. Caillaux's visit in 1925, Mr. Mellon accounted for his change of policy by the fact that France's fiscal capacity had diminished between the autumn and spring. Accordingly, in the opinion of the American Minister, the possibilities of payment had changed in the course of six months, and without having been put to any practical test. This was an admission that the figures given in the agreement were merely of a provisional nature.

American policy may therefore be said to have been intransigent in principle and conciliatory in practice. For this reason, we were wrong in seeming to raise a new question of principle immediately after the conclusion of the Béranger agreement, and, for the same reason, we think it preferable to put an end to theoretical discussion by ratifying it. If the American Senate is disposed to accept practical reservations, or the French Government thinks that it can safeguard the honour of

the country by verbal reservations, they can add solemn preambles to the agreement! To tell the truth, they would only seem to us indispensable if the United States were peopled by other Latin races. The Belgians and Italians managed to get amending provisions discreetly introduced into the agreement, or better still, quietly understood, as being too obvious, whereas we confirm the American resistance to our demands by laying stress on them. This time Talleyrand might perhaps think "the less said the better." But that is not the question. In any case, something must be done.

WHAT RATIFICATION WOULD MEAN

Would an interested and opportunist ratification of this kind be an act of hypocrisy unworthy of our country? We think not. It would merely be saying: "We cannot refuse the advantageous substitute you propose for the original debt. We quite understand that it is not an act of generosity on your part, as you defended yourselves vigorously to your electors against any idea of having yielded to that feeling; and that neither could it be a final settlement, both because it is not in accordance with your previous offers, and because the future is uncertain. What object would there be in changing the figures agreed upon into others which would be no better adapted to the realities, and which would only record a fleeting point of contact between the public opinions? Your present conditions reflect a very optimistic view

of the chances of French recovery in due course, for if we are able to transfer such sums some day, it will mean that we are very rich, and that our exportation has enormously increased. We are only too glad to hope that you may be right, but we do not feel at all sure of it. Naturally, just as in the case of the Reparation debt, the inter-Allied debts cannot be definitely fixed until after a preliminary experimental period, and if it appears in a few years time that your estimate was mistaken, we count on your again modifying your claim, because, to begin with, you will have no choice."

THE REAL MORAL PROBLEM

Finally, if the evolution in America is accelerated by normal considerations, it will not be by those which our propaganda complacently enumerates.

It is not the fact that mistakes create rights, and that the disastrous bargain we concluded justifies a partial revision of our debt. Nor is it true that the United States profited pecuniarily by taking part in the war. Their neutrality benefited them by enabling them to reverse their position as debtors, and supplant their European rivals in the world markets. Even this was only a secondary factor, as compared with the increasing normal development of their home consumption, which is the main source of American prosperity. Cancellation of political debts, contracted during the period of a common war, can only be justified by sentimental considera-

tions—and this is not the whole problem. Above all, it is vain to expect questions that arise in a new world, in which the former antagonisms have lost their meaning, to be capable of adjustment through recollections of the war, and still more vain to propose this out-of-date ideology to a people thinking in terms of the future and of federation.

What is true is that there is a necessary and compelling relation between power and responsibility.

For the last fifteen years, two conflicting tendencies have inspired the policy of the Washington Government in turn. The one, inspired by America's present prosperity, and based on a belief that not more than one tenth of her trade is with foreign countries, aims at prolonging this economic independence, in accordance with the Monroe spirit. The other, thinking more of the future activities of the United States, of their destiny as exporters, and also of the duty of giving a moral lead, imposed upon them by their material pre-eminence, inclines to regulate European recovery in accordance with American interests and ideals. During the years of American neutrality, Wilson and House embodied these two schools of thought, in their friendly divergence of opinion. House, pursuing the plan of mediation, of which he had laid the first foundations on the actual eve of the war, wanted the Republican Government to be prepared to intervene in order to prevent either a decisive Russian or decisive German military victory, and in

order to impose a general organization of peace upon Europe, admitting of a reduction of armaments and a mutual guarantee. Wilson was more guided by his natural caution with regard to foreign affairs, by anxiety to be faithful to the peace mandate the American people had given him, fear of seeing them stoop to the level of European bellicosity, and an ambitious desire to prevent war values from triumphing by acting as arbiter between the combatants. Consequently, he did not want to take part in the conflict, and was only compelled to do so by repeated provocation from Germany, who preferred American intervention to a cessation of her submarine warfare. He then came round to his friend House's views, and took up arms, ostensibly against Germany, but in reality against war, his aim being both to destroy Prussian feudalism and put an end to secret diplomacy. He wanted to oblige all the belligerents to negotiate openly, and to fight for humane rather than selfish aims. But this crusade, not being based upon a real solidarity of interests between America and Europe, could only have been carried on by a sustained moral impetus, difficult to imagine in the case of a plutocracy. In fact, Wilson was disavowed by the American Senate, and in the meantime the artificial flood of exportation to Europe, caused by the war, subsided.

A residue of the period of solidarity was bound to remain, however, namely the inter-Allied debt, which necessitated a policy. The leaning to isolation and the

leaning to domination that we have described, then reappeared in new forms, and the present hybrid policy pursued by the American Government only indicates prolonged hesitation between them. There are some who adhere blindly to the principle of payment through selfish interest, through national pride, and also through fear of being drawn into European complications, if they discriminate. Others—this tendency may be observed in the case of Senator Borah—have a vague feeling that the debt can never yield any appreciable gain to the Treasury, and would therefore like to make it an excuse for intervention in Europe. Those who incline to this view are more or less consciously aiming at substituting the American army, which has been disbanded, for the participation in the League of Nations which they have refused. They flatter themselves that by exerting power this time, without accepting responsibility, they combine the contradictory wishes of the American people. They are mistaken. A claim which is not backed up by political collaboration, or by any real possibility of diplomatic or military intervention, or by a commercial system, cannot long retain its value. At the present time, it might really be supposed that a tacit conspiracy existed between intransigent American and French Nationalists to safeguard the full value of the inter-Allied debt as a means of exerting pressure. In reality, during the delay caused by their inability to agree, the absence of a settlement, the uncertainty of

the future, and the hostility between the public opinions, are a constant menace to our currency. With more skill, we should have compelled our creditors to define their position before now. Do they want to be paid? That would mean agreeing to send us some of their gold, and to concede us commercial privileges, for we must have credit to enable us to produce, and markets to enable us to export. We agree, but they will soon refuse. Do they want to oblige Europe to combine? Let us forestall them, and do it in our own way. Do they want to colonize us? Our domestic legislation would suffice to dispose of projects of that kind. Moreover they would not conduce to real payments, for, unless accompanied by human colonization or annexation of territory, financial colonization only delays the problem of transfer. We have no fear of this risk, which, moreover, seems precluded by the provision in the Mellon-Béranger agreement that payment is to be made in dollars. By maintaining their claim, and at the same time keeping up a customs barrier which must inevitably impede the payments, the Americans seem to suggest that their aim is to establish an economic protectorate in Europe; but experience has already shown us that there is no such idea. In 1924, when the collapse of the mark gave them an excellent opportunity, the Americans poured credits into Germany, without attempting to obtain control of industries whose interests were ancillary to their own, or to paralyse those whose interests were competitve. Their invest-

ments in Europe have hitherto been simply a necessity, imposed by the super-abundance of gold, and encouraged by the difference in the price of money. The present orientation of American commerce, and their traditional fear of political responsibility, are sufficient guarantee that it will be the same in the future, if we know how to protect ourselves. Unless our creditors act boldly, they will neither find an important new market in Europe, nor much influence—hardly even interest on their money!

Here we come to the great economic laws which will finally determine the solution of the problem. If we go to the root of the matter, the inter-Allied debts are doomed to extinction because they have had no productive counter-part. In default of a corresponding increase of wealth, the figures of the debt have become disproportionate to the commercial figures and the European budgets. American writers insist that a reasonable development of trade might yet—before 1987!—make the annuities seem comparatively small.[1] But to enable the debtor of a protectionist country to increase his exports, a fresh demand must arise for them in a third country, and this is the aim of the co-operative schemes ingeniously suggested by Sir Josiah Stamp, as a means of simultaneously liquidating the inter-Allied and Reparation debts. But, in practice, it would be a question of works of the future with no immediate yield, carried

[1] See *The Inter-Allied Debts and the United States*, edited by the National Industrial Conference Board. New York, 1925.

on in new countries which could not finance them. Therefore American credits would again be needed in the beginning. In the meantime, we cannot pay large sums, either out of the surplus of our internal revenue, which is too small, or out of the payments provided by the Dawes scheme, which, in the forms most susceptible of development, do not increase our immediate capacity to pay. We may perhaps pay, as Germany did, from 1924 to 1927, with money lent by our creditors. A time will come when private payments will cripple the public payments. We shall have obtained credits by ratifying the agreement, and the credits will bring us nearer to the cancellation. At the worst, a Franco-German offer of redemption would enable the Americans to make their concessions in the form of advantageous discount. In the end, the United States will only have been able to substitute a good debt for a bad debt, by appearing to insist on their claim.

The phantasmagoria of the debts will no doubt be dispelled in this way. This international myth might have conduced to bring about some great work of collaboration, but it could not have triumphed over the powerful coalition of interests, even amongst our creditors, which demands free trade. In reality, unless it can be done owing to the creation of surplus wealth, payment of the debts perverts the natural course of trade by setting up fresh customs barriers through the reaction of the disbursements on the exchanges and prices. Now

the world's greatest bankers met in 1926 to make an academic protest against Protection.

"POLITICAL" PROTECTION. THE GENERAL PROBLEM

THE time has gone by when the theoretical advantages of free trade over Protection were dispassionately disputed, and only on economic grounds. Before we can return to the old problem, that is to say, the conceivable free trade and comparatively simple, stable, and rational Protection of pre-war days, and again enjoy the well-lubricated, imperceptible inter-action of the whole European machinery, which those who were unable to maintain it in the past now promise us in the future, like the Golden Age of the ancient poets, we must abolish the political and financial "Protectionism" engendered by the war. During the last few years, we have seen customs barriers springing up, owing to the formation of new States and the general feeling of insecurity, defensive tariffs imposed against artificial exportation from countries with a depreciated currency, and the multiplication of over-producing industries, which impoverish one another by anarchic competition, without any organic justification.

The necessary alleviation of these conditions depends both on internal circumstances, which must be considered within each country, and general circumstances, which may be the subject of diplomatic *pourparlers*.

The first are the most urgent, for stabilization of its currency, and rational organization of industry in each country, will supply the base of operations and common vocabulary without which no conversations could be of any use. A general treaty could then be negotiated, abolishing the abnormal restrictions necessitated by the war (passports, etc.), instituting a maximum level of tariffs, and facilitating their unification. Private initiative must at the same time insure the formation of cartels which will relieve those joining them of all anxiety with regard to customs, and consequently involve reductions in the tariffs. All these attempts depend upon the different people within whose province they lie, but they are practically jointly responsible. Although the Government is limited in its work of reorganization by the necessities of domestic policy and respect for private rights, it should endeavour to direct the life of the country in accordance with international considerations, if it has understood the lesson of the war. This might be done by co-ordinating financial with commercial and commercial with foreign policy, and by carefully directing the producers through the medium of picked agents, familiar with the circumstances, and "specialists in generalization." It will, moreover, become easier in proportion to the development of a public opinion which regards economics from an international point of view, thus bringing factors within the Governments' sphere of action which are now beyond their control. Having set

a limit to secret diplomacy by strengthening public opinion, the League of Nations now owes it to itself to approach the economic sphere, and temper excessive capitalism by similar methods. Under its influence, production will be able to adapt its pace to that of the requirements, thus correcting the slight inequalities which are sometimes the origin of serious crises. The discovery of their solidarity will tend to put an end to rivalry between the nations, and the instrument of diplomatic conciliation will gradually become an instrument of social conciliation. It is for the League to show the necessary tact in this capacity, by being just as careful to avoid acting the part of schoolmaster as that of super-State. If it ignored private interests, it could only formulate academic theories. If it tried to control them, it would rouse their resistance. Its business is more to keep them in check by subjecting them to the control of a well-informed, vigilant, public opinion. The moment they feel themselves effectively supervised, they will begin to realize their social function. To guide Europe into this path might be the work of the Economic Conference which was M. Loucheur's brilliant idea.

THE FRANCO-GERMAN PROBLEM

But here again it would be useless to attempt to solve the general problem without first facing the Franco-German problem. There are many reasons for this. It dominates our foreign policy. The industries of the two

countries are partially dependent upon one another. A contract to pay reparation tends to stimulate trade. Agreement between the two strongest Powers on the continent, involving their satellites, simplifies general discussion. Their association would supply an admirable basis of credit for their internal development, or for the exploitation of Russia and other foreign countries. Above all, security and economic pacification are inseparable.

These two curves intersect one another at three points of their development. In the first place, the division of labour associated with any progress towards free trade must be based upon a feeling of mutual confidence and belief in peace. A State which lives in continual fear of war tries to produce all that is essential to its national defence within its own borders; this is one of the most frequent causes of Protection—and of war. On the other hand, in order to achieve the political *rapprochement*, the great capitalists, who play no small part in forming public opinion, must be interested in furthering it; sooner or later, the solidarity of interests will engender the proper feeling to justify and develop it. Finally, the probability and absurdity of the danger itself may incline people towards fusion. There are some who believe that a long bellicose tradition is stronger in the end than any political combinations, that such combinations only create a false atmosphere of security, which

allows of the conflict being revived by indirect means, without attracting the attention of public opinion, and consequently without meeting with opposition from the pacifists—and their opinion cannot be ignored. A system of arbitration insures peace in South America, because people with a less encumbered heritage have more open minds, and because a small population, vast unpopulated territories, and increasing general prosperity, are bad conditions for the development of conflicts. But in our over-excited, over-populated, and impoverished Europe, the great enemy Powers are perhaps faced with a serious dilemma from which they would probably refuse to draw either of the two conclusions—peace or war—today. Alliances were formerly reversed by means of diplomatic royal marriages; today it may perhaps be necessary to cement reconciliations by uniting factories. Moreover, it has never been possible to extend economic *rapprochements* except within a policy of alliance.

Let us remember the precedents. The word *Zollverein* recalls the whole story of the formation of the German Empire. The customs union extended gradually through Germany, hand in hand with the movement in support of political *rapprochement.* In 1850 Austria-Hungary was excluded from it by Bismarck, in a spirit of rivalry. On the other hand, her participation in it was contemplated in 1879, after the conclusion of the Austro-German alliance, then, in a more definite way, during the

Great War, through the brotherhood in arms.[1] Conquests were doubtful, a form of internal victory had to be found; a system of partial free-trade was then agreed upon, the rivalry of Germany and Hungary being an obstacle in the way of anything more. It was only after the war that the problem was sufficiently simplified for it to be possible to contemplate complete union, Austria being isolated and questions of race and pre-eminence eliminated. But then it was associated as a matter of course with the idea of political fusion.

AMERICAN COMPETITION

So bold a solution is certainly not conceivable between France and Germany. It is none the less true that public opinion, diplomacy, and industry, must keep pace, as far as possible, in the movement towards *rapprochement*, each coming into line with the progress made by the others.

Up to what point? Some would choose American competition as the landmark; and there may indeed be something attractive, at first sight, in the idea of constructing a new theory of balance of power, based on the proportion of economic strength, which would suggest the advisability of forming new units on the same lines and of the same size as the greatest existing unit,

[1]Details of these negotiations have been given by Messrs Gratz and Schüller in their book: *Die Aeussere Wirtschaftspolitik Oesterreich Ungarns* (Holder-Pichler-Tempsky, Vienna).

namely, the United States, a customs territory with a hundred million inhabitants. Ought an effort to be made to create an equivalent in Europe to this American precedent? That is rather a simple way of putting the question. A particularly well-informed observer, M. André Siegfried, shows us, in a recent book,[1] how the present economic evolution tends to do away with direct rivalry between the United States and Europe rather than otherwise. In a great many branches of industry, Europe is protected against the United States by the very quality of her production, and the United States against Europe by the standardization of theirs. It may be very much in our interest to set up a large independent market in Europe—especially during the period in which the question of the inter-Allied debts will arise—, but not on the American model, which is incompatible both with our demography and our psychology. How could machinery working at high pressure be conceivable in an over-populated continent, where the first result of it would be unemployment? How could the publicity which uniformizes the mentality of the American consumers, and thus allows of mass production, be developed in a continent so differently constituted as ours? If we were to embark on this course, we should not only be renouncing our particular civilization, but even the ad-

[1] *Les États unis d'aujourdui*, (Colin). So many foreign books have been written, which have not even been translated, that we are glad to be able at last to mention a French book, and a most admirable one.

vantages our individualism and relative asceticism may give us. It is not certain, indeed, whether the American system, based on high wages and over-incitement to consumption, is superior to our own, in the long run. It succeeds in a country with great natural wealth, and in a period of uninterrupted progress, but this natural wealth is not inexhaustible, and the progress is limited by the law of diminishing returns. In fact, a serious crisis would very much damage the system as a whole. Europe, a continent with less wealthy producers and less docile consumers, must not indulge in the luxury of such a risk. Nothing but the artificial pressure of the debts could induce us to think of competing with the United States. Our competition would then take the form of rivalry between mass products in other markets—in which, assuming this hypothesis, the reduction of our standard of life would give us good chances.

THE CUSTOMS UNION

The scope of the Franco-German *rapprochement*, already limited by this exact definition of the American risk, is also limited by the conditions peculiar to our country. The branches of industry between which agreements can easily be imagined, are those which are both highly concentrated and have reached an analogous stage of development. Now during the last few years, German industry has gone very seriously ahead of ours. We ought not to take advantage of that to perpetuate our in-

feriority by protection, and in the last resort, by war. Our duty is to prepare for the necessary conversations by a horizontal organization, similar to that which our neighbours carried out immediately after the inflation of their currency. If the general customs union, which we hear some people already advocating, ought ever to be contemplated in practice, it can only be in the distant future. Its theoretical advantages are great. By combining, rival products might conquer new markets, and the complementary products would find a more extensive home market. Finally, the union would be the starting point of a division of labour and technical progress by which the consumers would benefit. It must, however, be preceded by progressive identification of cost prices, of the standard of life, of fiscal and monetary policy etc., and it may well be asked whether the differences existing between the nations in these respects do not coincide with irreducible moral peculiarities.

Another generation will answer this great question. We must not be too ambitious for our own.

VI

LEARN OR PERISH

ECONOMY AND POLICY

Such is the wide field open to French foreign policy and subject to Franco-German *rapprochement*. We have endeavoured to give its practical outlines without troubling about the old academic quarrel which seeks to order the relations between politics and economics in accordance with principles—an everlasting quarrel because it is encouraged by wrong definitions. The policy set up in opposition to economics is simply Nationalism. In its original sense the word applies to the art of managing human affairs as a whole wisely, and if we give it that sense, it is evident that in making decisions, practical statesmen are nowadays obliged to reckon with their repercussions on the economic movement, and, inversely, that the latter can only be insured free play within a political order. There can be no doubt that the less trade is subjected to a system of control, the more likely it is to develop, but the control can only be relaxed if a certain harmony is first established between the moral forces concerned. Compared with such an achievement, all the others are secondary considerations. It will always be easy to find experts capable of solving a question reduced to its material point of view. The difficulty

is to determine the exact point at which it can safely be left to them, and this is where genius is shown. It may even be true that at the present time economy is much more flexible than sentiment (to quote M. Bénés). As a matter of fact, paradoxical frontiers like Teschen have been accepted with no difficulty, whilst others, which are more natural, have paralysed business. But this adaptation of economy to sentiment entails waste of time, labour, and wealth. If the spirit of peace were to develop, the emotional tendencies would doubtless gradually incline towards the most perfect practical solution. In the struggle with nature, man would then be free from the obstacles he has put in his own way. If the progress that could be made were clearly understood, this in itself might modify the present feeling. This is an instance of the constant reaction which forms the real relationship between the two kinds of phenomena. Nothing but tact can decide where to draw the line between the immutable aspect of economy which fixes the limits of political activity, and its ductile aspect, which is the object of that activity. Tact, the traditional attribute of the diplomat. . . .

THE NEW MACHIAVELLI

In the future, as in the past, great politicians will be recognized by their gift for distinguishing between the zones of the possible and of the inevitable. The following are the principles which ought to inspire a new

Machiavelli: he must be resigned to the necessary evolutions from the first, that he may be able to adapt himself to them, but, contrary to the natural tendency of clever men, which is to hasten them, he must moderate their pace, and profit by time, which always leaves problems more or less open in the beginning, to choose the method of solving them; he must not allow himself to be deceived either by "vital necessities," so called in order to disguise the desire for them, or by pretended "rights," which arise out of reiterated claims, or, inversely, by dogmas which are inconsistent with permanent tendencies; neither must he try to satisfy all expectations, for that would only be deferring them, and fixing them on factitious aims; he must measure the spheres of influence with reference to alliances whose necessity is recognized, and no longer seek balance of power in equality between opposed elements, but in proportionate associations; he must remember that the humiliation of a rival provokes *revanche*, and consequently is no criterion of success at a time when the conflict is a reverse in itself; that written laws must be conjugated with natural laws by striving to exploit what one has and share what one cannot exploit, and that there must be the same fluidity of wealth in international public life as that which insures progress and order in private relations; he must further every means of registering changes in the material balance of power, without offending traditional susceptibilities; above all, he must

recognize that we are in an epoch of transition between two kinds of values, and must sacrifice the prerogatives of the old order, which will have no further value when this work is achieved, and seek advantages in the new order.

THE RÔLE OF THE GOVERNMENT

THEREFORE it is not true that diplomacy has lost its former importance. On the contrary, its sphere has widened. It is no longer merely a question, as formerly, of reconciling public forces; private interests must be drawn into their orbit. The danger of diplomacy is just that there is a certain disparity between the traditional field of its activity and the real field of the forces which generate conflicts. A Minister for Foreign Affairs is powerless if he stands alone, even if he is pursuing the right path. All his colleagues have their share in influencing international life. What they ought to do now is to concentrate their efforts, which are still divergent, upon a common aim. The Prime Minister is the real Minister for Foreign Affairs.

But he in turn finds his power limited by the development of democracy, or more simply, public opinion. He is still, to a certain extent, a slave to the propaganda which he has made, or which has been made by his predecessors, and the only liberty he has is to decide on his own line of action. All that can be expected of him, to begin with, is to keep up the propaganda most likely

to engender efficacious action, and then give this action an inspiring interpretation by associating it with the great moral tendencies of the nation. The rest depends on the country—on what is best in it.

RAPPROCHEMENT

EVERY one will no doubt agree that a reconciliation cannot be lasting unless it is complete; and to say that public opinion ought to uphold those who advocate it is not enough. For what is public opinion? That is a question that might be discussed indefinitely. It reflects interests and is reflected by them. One may search in vain for anything real in this reflex inter-action. It is therefore necessary to add that in each country the whole structure of Society must be drawn into the movement in favour of *rapprochement*. Now in Germany, as in France, this structure is not determined by political distinctions, consequently they cannot be relied upon to associate it with the movement.

PRACTICAL NATIONALISM IN GERMANY

WE have already had occasion, in this book, to protest against the exaggerated hopes and fears France has based on the fluctuations of German domestic policy. It is true that the Nationalists opposed the Locarno treaties in the Reichstag; but at one time they rejected the principle itself of the Pact, as involving a renunciation of German territory, and the choice of a western, anti-

Russian, policy, whilst at another they criticized the inadequacy of the repercussions.[1] In short, hesitating between principles and expediency, all that they contributed to the discussion was the gratuitous statement that they would have made a better bargain. They even excused their opposition on the ground that it strengthened the hand of the Government in its negotiations with the other countries. Today, their desire for power inclines them to accept the agreements on which all practical policy in Germany must necessarily be based. They refused to take the responsibility of signing them, but must accept the responsibility of the consequences. In fact, in order to develop industry and thus combat the social danger of unemployment, they must necessarily look beyond the German frontiers, and nothing but projects of collaboration can take the place of the former Pan-German plans of domination. As to the *Mitteleuropa* scheme, it must either be adjourned or resumed with the help of France. Finally, it must be remembered that the Nationalist ideology thrives upon subventions whose source may be diverted to the advantage of *rapprochement*. We are warranted in believing that in a great heterogeneous country, intellectually decentralized, having no clearly defined tradition, and no love of politics, prejudice will soon yield to the call of interest. Until a generation of disbanded officers, incapable of abandoning the former dream of German greatness, and driven into opposition

[1] See von Tirpitz and Westarp's speeches.

by having no occupation, has completely died out, there will always be resistance. But these malcontents will have no following unless persistent French hostility throws the German Government back on alliance with Russia or Italy—that is to say towards subversive tendencies.

FRENCH SOCIETY

In France, the problem is very different, and more delicate, for with us, sentiment is less amenable to the call of interest, or even of reason. No professional philosophy as clear as that of English finance or German industry has ever taken shape amongst our men of business, and all classes are influenced, in proportion as they approach power, by a very special social atmosphere, about which it will be necessary to say a few words here.

A portrayal of French influences would indeed be singularly incomplete if it omitted what is by general agreement spoken of as "Society." It is true that *salons* have ceased to exert a direct influence on Governmental activity, yet it is still there that distinguished foreigners gain their knowledge of France, and above all, it is thence that the watchwords go forth which guide public opinion in this or that direction of thought. The redistribution of wealth, in consequence of the war, and the development of industry, have brought new elements to the front, without any moral or social views of their own, and anxious to adopt those which would enable

them to display their newly made fortunes on the recognized stage. In default of being able to copy the manners of the traditionists, they have copied their ideas. "Snobbism" has thus very largely contributed to spread the prejudices of a disaffected *élite,* which had stood aloof from the Third Republic since 1877, and was consequently quite out of touch with modern political life. Similarly, the charms of money outweighed all the former distinctions, and created rapid solidarity between the groups which up to a short time before the war were still divided by profound differences of opinion and birth. Nationalism has been the disastrous ground on which the reconciliations have been effected. Foreigners living in France, whose anti-German ardour compensates for lack of personal attraction, and who hope that gratitude for it may secure them the privilege of nationalization; French people of mixed descent, who still dread the "spy-mania" of the war; Jews who have been deprived of their traditional feeling of international solidarity by the disappearance of anti-Semitism, and whose patriotic ardour guarantees them against revived persecution; writers trying to abtain access to or favours from the literary powers, who have not developed in the same way as the political powers; blushing *nouveaux riches,* who are conspicuous, in spite of themselves, by their excessive zeal in celebrating the rites of the dominant social religion; capitalists glad to find something to divert their attention from the social problem; Con-

servatives who fight democracy by outbidding it, and hope to gain by resuming the Chauvinism of revolutionary origin which their forefathers had endeavoured to moderate, having regard to European realities—all so many recruits to the Nationalist doctrine, which, being monopolized by profiteers and having consequently ceased to represent genuine feeling, has lost both its proportion and its national value.

In the meantime, the depreciation in the value of the franc, combined with the natural prestige of our civilization and political freedom, attracted large numbers of people to Paris from foreign countries whose exchange was high. Our country was their holiday resort, and our customs were an encouragement to frivolity. They imported a taste for luxury, which was regarded as a mark of power and merit, and a habit of spending, contracted in a country where capital is amassed without thrift, and increased in our country by a fall in gold prices which gave it the stimulus of interest. All elements in society that think more of pleasure than of anything else then gravitated towards them. French, that is to say pure French, was no longer spoken at entertainments. The artists, the artisans themselves, able to pay for luxuries in a country which can no longer afford more than bare necessities, adapted their tastes to the foreign standards. Thus at a time which called for international collaboration and an effort to safeguard civilization, our intellectual traditions were

seriously impaired, whilst at the same time we rigidly adhered to all our political prejudices.

The miscellaneous elements composing such a *coterie* could not have more than a few abstract and ephemeral ideas in common. Fascism proved an attraction for a time. A Government was regarded as Conservative which had no principles, was recruited from amongst former revolutionaries, founded upon syndicalism, and forced upon the monarchy. Patriotic feeling was not alarmed at the appearance on the scene of a Mediterranean rival, because it is no longer determined by consideration for French interests; it merely consists in obstinate antagonism to certain foreign States. The mental attitude is one of opposition. Anti-German feeling, in particular, has become a comfortable habit, and those who pander to it become influential without further effort. One foreign statesman, whose pacifism insures his not being directly hostile to us, but inclines him to find great fault with our Nationalist ante-war policy, will be considered Francophobe, whilst another, who approves of forcible methods—even when employed by us, but is prepared to employ them—even against us, will be regarded as Francophil.

During the years in which Society has consisted of these incongruous elements, it has been unable to play its traditional rôle, which is to combine satisfaction of its vanity with the necessities of international life. Its maxim, in the days of its greatness, was that *what was*

useful to the country was the correct thing. Before the war, this was still acted upon to a certain extent. The formation of private Anglo-French ties led to the conclusion of the *Entente Cordiale;* invitations to dinner pacified the advanced elements of the Third Republic. Now as then, French society owes it to itself to place its natural field of conciliation through the medium of good breeding and courtesy, at the service of such fresh *rapprochements* as may seem desirable from an estimate of the political forces. In our opinion, the elements of this essential reform exist in all classes, and all ought to play a part in it. The recognized *bourgeoisie,* who, with the exception of a few who have benefited by inflation, are learning by daily experience that private interest coincides with the national interest, and the national interest with European peace; the clerical circles, which are secretly divided, and some of whom would rather follow the Pope's pacifist lead than that of the reactionary elements to which they are enfeoffed by tradition; and the aristocracy, for alongside of a provincial nobility, demoralized by idleness and loss of its privileges, which confines itself to a purely negative attitude, there is a Parisian and internationalist aristocracy, which is led to consider European interests, either by reason of its foreign connections (although this factor plays no part where Franco-German relations are concerned) or through hereditary comprehension of the obligations of power, or a spirit of opposition which dates back to *la*

Grande Mademoiselle and the fourth of August, or by a certain "counter-snobbism," which seeks to differentiate between equals and conquer fresh spheres, or lastly, by a very exalted conception of the duties of the upper class, which has been handed down from generation to generation.

We have confidence in the future. In proportion as the scum left by the great upheavals disappears from the surface, we shall see the "inflation patriotism," which is too feeble to be circumspect, and is expended in outward manifestations, replaced by the true patriotism which sacrifices even its hatreds on the altar of the country. There will be hostesses as well as statesmen with a genius for innovation. The boldest of them will readily overstep the narrow limits that divide scandal from prestige. Instead of being boycotted, our enemies will be enthusiastically acclaimed. Every one will be surprised to find that they have two legs and a head, and will think them as delicious as Montesquieu's Persians. We may then earn our former reputation for hospitality. The *Cercle de L'Union* was founded by French gentlemen immediately after the conclusion of the 1815 treaties, to facilitate the resumption of contact with our triumphant enemies, thus showing that, even when vanquished, France could take the initiative of necessary *rapprochements*. Today, after the humiliation of 1918 and occupation of the Rhinelands, the French are better

received in Berlin than the Germans in Paris. It is time we revived our tradition.

THE RECLASSIFICATION OF VALUES

As a matter of fact, this evolution will merely represent the inevitable reclassification of French values.

It is very evident that the organized forces of the country do not at present adequately represent its latent forces. How is a true proportion to be fixed between them? This is a most complex problem. It is partially a financial problem, for the effect of stabilizing the franc would be to rehabilitate the classes and professions whose interests are most directly bound up with those of the whole nation. It is also an educational problem, for the present confusion is that of a country which has been deserted by its former *élite*, and has not yet learned how to form another by selection from the masses. The problem for the Press is to insure independent information by better commercial organization. It is a Parliamentary problem, for the efficacy of the legislative machinery cannot be insured without a reliable majority; and an electoral problem, for this majority cannot be formed whilst the real questions are not put to the people. If the necessary effort is made in all these directions, the organized country will express an enlightened and coherent opinion, capable of upholding our delegates in the pacific Geneva disputes. In fact, it will not

only be a question of avoiding war in future, but also of gaining peace. Even if there is to be no more bloodshed, there will still be victors and vanquished. A Government will be obliged to make great concessions if it is clear that the public opinion of the country is ready for all possible solutions, but, in another way, it will lose its freedom to negotiate if this opinion obliges it to pursue an aim disproportionate to its actual strength. Moreover, during the last few years, the excessive Chauvinism of the *Bloc National*, and then its indifference towards foreign problems during the period of financial difficulty, have been equally regrettable attitudes. The sound elements must be reunited for effective action which are now divided into two hostile groups, each of which disavows one or other of the two great conditions of peace—the moderation which averts dangers, or the force of terrorism. At the same time we must eliminate both the stagnant Conservatism which fears the social consequences of a European *rapprochement*, and the Jacobin Nationalism, inclining to a semi-humanitarian, semi-bellicose Interventionism, which was formed in 1792 to keep up the war of propaganda, allowed itself to be exploited by Napoleon, demanded the left bank of the Rhine in 1830 and intervention on behalf of Poland under the Second Empire, opposed Jules Ferry's colonial policy on anti-German principles, associated itself with the Clemencist tyranny during the war, regarded the League of Nations as a means of risk-

ing our disorganized army in defence of all the injustices in the world, and whose only conception of reconciliation with Germany today is as a by-product of the Chauvinism against Italy and the United States.

This can only be done on two conditions; we must find a fresh inspiration and formulate a definite practical programme.

Nothing great is ever done without heart and imagination. Innovationists have no instruments now, for all that is most liberal minded in the country turns from politics as from an incomprehensible and mediocre chaos. Yet the eternal drama is played through their medium. No one is capable of ruling who cannot trace this complexity to some permanent moral tendencies. People are too ready to contrast intellect and action; in our opinion they have never been so closely allied. There is no doubt that we are in the thick of a fight between hostile passions, but the very violence of the opposition has roused another dormant passion, the instinct of self-preservation, which is combined today with a will to understand. We shall either be devoured by the Sphinx, or we shall guess her riddles. Learn or perish, Lord Grey said. That is the chance given to modern intelligence, and its tragic value.

In response to this quasi-religious appeal for enlightenment, those governing us have only set up old idols. Temporary diplomatic policies and debatable interpretations of history have been put forward as

taboo. Dominating politics, fetishism has invaded science. Pure and simple search for truth, when it has been able to survive, has merely been regarded as a peculiar sentimental attitude. We may perhaps be allowed to quote a personal instance of this. Our treatise on the origins of the war has been generally interpreted as adherence to this or that section of the Left, or this or that pacifist doctrine; but we should have felt bound to carry on the same campaign even within the framework of Nationalism. Deep-seated reform is essential, whatever the method chosen. In our opinion, the rôle of the intellectuals towards politics ought to be the same as that of the philosopher towards morality, as defined by Henri Poincaré. It is their duty to bring rational experience to bear on the Party theories, without fear or favour. They ought to say to the statesman: "If you want this, you ought also to want that." "If you want considerable security, you must not at the same time aim at considerable expansion. If you want to be able to form alliances against Germany some day, you must first incline people towards them by pursuing a policy of Franco-German conciliation." Etc.

It is therefore simply as a matter of conscience that we shall impugn the false problems which still bewilder the French people. The choice between European prosperity and the safety of our particular civilizations? Illusory! If we choose isolation, the economic predomination of the extra-European countries will gradually

involve the decline of all continental civilizations. The choice between a federation of the Great Powers and an armed, limited, and revocable agreement between them? Out of date! To be entirely independent, we should have to be Protectionist, consequently Nationalist. In order to keep up the strain upon our strength we should have to justify it by keeping up the feeling of insecurity. Thus, in order to avoid defeat we cultivate danger. A closed circle from which no escape is possible. These supposed peace alternatives merely mask the struggle between peace and war.

Let us therefore consider those who refuse to accept the modern conditions of peace as belonging to the bellicose camp. There is only one way open to men of good will, but they can pursue it with more or less intelligence, system, and realism. There is a dividing line between two kinds of peace. The exhaustion of the combatants guarantees us a truce. Shall we allow it to degenerate into a provisional armistice, without union of hearts or fusion of interests? Shall we accept a negative and anarchic peace? Or a verbal peace, framed on too large a scale and with no real meaning? Or do we, on the contrary, wish for an organized peace, founded on collaboration between the Great Powers, on defence of their common interest and its progressive identification with the general interest?

The choice will depend on the value of the League of Nations. This great institution may become a blessing

or a curse. According to the policy pursued, the equality it must establish between its members will take the form of disarmament or re-armament, and the private *ententes* which support it will enlarge their base or their apex. In the second case, it will merely be the means of generalizing conflicts. It will function—only a little more quickly—as it virtually functioned in 1914. Is that the aim pursued? For our part, if it were to come to that, we should not hesitate to prefer the former German theory of localization. Treaties which claim to immobilize the world can no more insure peace than an institution separated from its essential conditions. Long ago, a great French historian, Albert Sorel, wrote decisively on this subject. "Treaties," he said, "express the relations which existed at the time of their conclusion . . . the rights that they ratify never outlive the circumstances in which they were established." [1] What indignation there would be in France if these statements had been made by a German! Since it has been possible to adduce them as the lesson taught by our history, let us take them to heart. We must remember that the principal rôle of diplomatic instruments is to note fresh orientations, and that they only endure if they have succeeded in establishing an atmosphere of confidence in a group of Powers worthy to guide the others, and capable of

[1] We were opportunely reminded of this remark by Count Wladimir d'Ormesson, in an interesting review of the position of France in Europe (*Revue de Paris*, December 15, 1926—January 1, 1927).

holding them in check. Versailles is already doomed. Locarno may survive, because this time it is less a case of a treaty than of a plan to preserve peace from day to day, by different means, but in an unvarying spirit. Are we ready?

This great political choice is also a moral choice. A most difficult choice, for the elaboration of an international synthesis is a more complex task than the simple organization of national defence, and less directly bound up with our traditional instincts. We must now devote ourselves to repressing the ardour we expended on destroying. A most just choice, too. This effort to give humanity precedence over the law recalls the old legend of Antigone. Creon's immutable commands could not suffice for any period of the world's history. To measure the scope of the struggle, let us imagine, as M. Jules Cambon did in his book, the creation of a static League of Nations a century ago. It would have perpetuated all the systems of oppression existing at that time, and prevented the formation of the great European nations whose conservation seems to us to justify peace today. There are other formations in the limbo of the future ready to come into being in the same way. Do not let us debar them from access to life!

The French people are generally very little affected by these considerations, because they think that they now have stable and negative interests. Is this so certain? Can the privileges we have last indefinitely without any

change? For our part we think not. War has always been the *ultima ratio* of an inorganic peace; now in this game of chance our stake would be more important than that of our adversaries, and it might pass into their hands, if only through the drain of the war. It seems to us, on the other hand, that the new trend of international evolution is in absolute consonance with French interests.

HARMONY BETWEEN PATRIOTISM AND PEACE

The policy pursued immediately after the war was inconsistent with the realities. The Covenant of the League of Nations was elaborated under the auspices of two Powers, neither of whom was suited to fulfil its essential obligations. Neither the United States, an independent continent, nor England, an island, could feel the necessity of European union and guarantee in their heart of hearts. Their psychology does not incline them to intervene, and consequently their promises of intervention could not insure a lasting peace. We, on the other hand, are placed, through our history, in the midst of the conflicts it is now a question of ending; our geographical situation marks us out as the intermediary, and our territorial disinterestedness as the moral guide. Having achieved our unity and our expansion, we can condemn conquests without any underlying motive, and without disavowing our past. Not preference for any one theory

over another, but simple consideration of French interests suggests the advisability of a policy of collaboration. War and peace are myths to be cultivated according to the nation's needs. The one has been the means of forming it; its preservation is conditional on the other.

Let anyone endeavour to apply to present day France the ideas we associate with our greatness. Nationalism? It tends to arrest the endosmosis of immigration which is now our only means of repairing our losses, and to develop the military qualities which it would be fatal to us to turn to account. Force? It always governs the relations between nations, but moral force is a growing part of it, and moreover our material force inclines to diminish. Victory? It can only benefit a country, if, like that of Germany, it is won in the course of an essential forward movement. But what means have we of exploiting it? Hegemony? Those who regard this as a political ideal can still pursue it, but only collectively. Imperialism? Why be afraid of the word? We do not forget—it is too often forgotten—that France rules over a great Empire. But she can only keep it by establishing a certain collaboration with the indigenous populations, and avoiding what might encourage them to rebel—above all conflicts with white peoples.

European through egotism! That should be our motto. If we adopt it, we still have a great part to play!

THE DEMOGRAPHIC PROBLEM

This, however, is disputed. Our race is accused—not only abroad—of being to some extent decadent, which, combined with the decreasing birth rate, would put us out of touch with the spirit of the times. This failure to distinguish between quality and quantity is in itself a philosophic scandal. But besides that, history does not show that there is any close connection between the greatness of a country and its birth rate. We are often asked to imagine the case of two nations, each having fifty million inhabitants. In the course of the same period, the population of the one increases to a hundred million, and that of the other decreases to ten million, owing to the difference in the birth rate. At this point, we are told, the weaker will be conquered by the stronger of the two, either through war or through infiltration. Even in this blunt form, the argument does not seem to us convincing—or rather, it implies another hypothesis which is assumed, namely that the "feeble" State will be incapable of pursuing a policy of immigration. In reality, the fundamental question is not to decide whether the inhabitants of a country (who are themselves of very different racial origin) will have many descendants at a given time, but whether they have territory rich enough to support a large population, an organization sensible enough to apportion the foreign elements introduced, to place them according to what is best for the national economy, to distribute or reject them having regard to the pro-

portion of people of the same race and colour already acquired and the needs of the country, and finally, an *élite* capable of keeping control over the newly assimilated elements. It is true that States such as France are naturally menaced by aggression from their over-populated neighbours, whose policy would be first to encourage an increase in the birth rate, or at least it would be a non-Malthusian policy; the second step would be to organize emigration to certain French territories; the third, to glorify the emigrants' original nationality in the colony thus formed; the fourth, to claim the territory on the ground of the right of peoples to self-determination,—a claim which would serve as a moral argument before a Conciliation Commission, and propaganda after a declaration of war.

But this calculation can easily be frustrated on the ground of existing right, and it is a pity that France has not yet framed a definite policy as regards this question, like the United States and Italy. It might take the form of encouraging rural immigration, which is more stable than urban immigration, and expediting assimilation by a combination of measures, such as educational legislation and facilitating naturalization.[1] A selfish policy? Not at all. By throwing our country open to the surplus population of neighbouring countries, on certain conditions, we should enable them to avoid serious eco-

[1] M. Marcel Paon has made some useful suggestions with regard to this in his book: *L'Immigration en France.* (Payot).

nomic difficulties. It is true that in expediting the denationalization of the immigrants, we should be reducing the advantages the countries which export human beings have hitherto retained. The expense of feeding and educating the young people in their native country will gradually cease to be refunded by their ultimately sending back part of their salaries, and emigration will end by being a dead loss. But this will incline those countries to a policy of birth control, which will be in the general interest. As a matter of fact, it can be mathematically proved that the means of subsistence are now increasing less rapidly than the population, that the great natural scourges, which were formerly capable of restoring the equilibrium, are tending to disappear, and that wars themselves only aggravate the problem, because they consume less men than capital. Will humanity persist in trusting to chance, or will it decide to take its destiny in hand? Here again we believe that France can serve as a guide and model in opposing blind progress.

WHAT THE WAR MEANT

THERE can be no question of opposition between France and Humanity unless force of habit and strength of feeling triumph over true interest. It is surely impossible to see any meaning in our existence if we are to be guided by war propaganda. Every one now sees that victory has not changed the essential features of the Franco-German

problem, and that, moreover, our international difficulties are less due to the special character of the German people than to the proportion of the wealth we have acquired to the population of our neighbours. The Moroccan problem was revived in 1926 through the indirect influence of Italy. All the questions that we thought would be settled by victory might reappear in the same way, under different forms, one after another. From that time, if the war had to be considered anti-German, we could only recognize that it was a failure. But let us consider what the combatants did rather than what the politicians said! In their case, the war was more a supreme form of obedience to laws than a manifestation of hostility towards an enemy, more a tremendous experience than a reasoned action. The magnitude of the phenomenon eclipsed its causes. Their minds, enlarged by the battle between the nations, rejected the narrow ideas which prevailed in the beginning. Diplomatic side-issues fell into oblivion in the transformation of the world. The carnage blunted the memories which warranted it—the memory of 1792, which made us regard the propagation of democracy throughout the world as the sole ideal, and that of 1870, which made us reduce our history to a military competition with Germany. The combatants died with a tremendous unanswered question in their minds. It behoves our generation to give the answer in the future by transforming Europe, and thus justifying their sacrifice. We have learnt through

them that politics may endanger the whole of life. The sacrifice of so many young lives to State policy has disgusted us with apathy, and strengthened our anxiety to urge a point of view we have so much at heart. We want to preclude the danger they have shown us, to live the life of which they have been deprived. Through transfusion of their wasted energy we may perhaps create a better world.

More profound meditation on the war thus frees us from the narrow conceptions it sheltered, just as consideration of the real interests of the country has raised us above its prejudices. There are signs of a growing harmony between ideals that we have been told were irreconcilable. Harmony between patriotism and peace! As a universal formula, supported by the experience of our own country, is there not something in it to inspire enthusiasm?

A DEFINITE PROGRAMME

Our aim throughout this book has been to formulate a practical programme. It will perhaps be said that its meshes are so regular that they allow part of the truth to escape through them. We admit it. The acme of perfection would be a policy which combined all the different ideals, all the opposed interests, all the subtle influences which can affect the evolution of the world. But in the effort to bring all these elements into exact

proportion, those making the calculation would overlook the chief thing, the impetus required to set the system in motion. During the time that they would spend in perfecting it, some simple and clumsy solution would be adopted. At a certain point in the march of intellect, it must voluntarily give place to action. This is why we have had no hesitation in recommending the least imperfect solution, after trying to grasp all the complexities of the problem. We have dispassionately considered the remedy the Governments have proposed in a thousand different forms during the last few years. We have avoided the general language that smoothes over differences that are too marked at Geneva. We have substituted the reality of Germany for the spectre of the aggressor ostensibly pursued. In order to avoid giving offence, no name is mentioned, but this falsifies the problems. We have shown that the League of Nations could not hope to bring about a sudden reconciliation between divided and hostile Governments on the shores of Lake Geneva, and that it ought rather to establish the resultant of spontaneous converging trends. We have reminded our readers that the instruments must be tuned before the concert is given. We have ventured to speak of alliance with Germany, and have even pointed out that alliance would not suffice unless it allowed of progressive union, within the limits prescribed by economy and psychology.

THE SPIRIT OF LOCARNO AND ITS APPLICATION

An alliance such as we have in mind would not be either exclusive or unlimited, but it would necessitate a tremendous change in the habits we have acquired. There are many who dispute this, and are satisfied with the progress achieved. Therefore it may be as well to point out in conclusion the differences which distinguish the spirit of Locarno from its present application.

Since 1924, an effort has been made to effect political reform without moral reform. But those engaged in it had begun by leaving the Nationalists to write history. Having denounced Germany as a "robber nation," they expected to metamorphose her by a stroke of the Republican wand, and proposed to shake hands with her. That gave their adversaries a good chance. It was easy to show that the Reich still existed, that to a great extent it employed the same personnel, and that it refused to abjure its history. Having their hands tied by this antithesis, the French Government have been unable to pursue a definite policy. Its zigzags have faithfully represented the anarchy of a public opinion weary of one policy, but not ripe for another. Briand's compromises have marked a stage between two opposite methods; a necessary transition, and one which might be beneficial, if public opinion were being educated at the same time. But no one has had the courage to undertake that. The Locarno treaties have been the result of

six years experience, during which time the League of Nations has shown an inherent tendency to attach less value to general engagements, and to define and interchange those of a private nature. We resigned ourselves to the necessity of a direct *entente* with Germany because we had not succeeded in putting life into any system of security without it; but the country thought that it was doing its ex-enemy a quasi-gratuitous favor. The intervention of the Quai D'Orsay in the Germano-Belgian negotiations left an impression that the new signatures gave us a right to prevent territorial rectifications being made by mutual agreement, and an interest in doing so. The continued occupation of the Rhineland seemed a repudiation of the peace on which both sides were congratulating themselves. It substituted incidental and subsidiary questions for the great permanent questions at issue between France and Germany. It gave rise to incidents which could not prevent the necessary *rapprochement*, but could deprive us of the credit and benefit of it. Under the Herriot Government, the Nathusius affair, the delay in evacuating Cologne; under the Briand Government, wrangling to the last over German disarmament; all these were occasions on which we either ought not to have quarrelled, or ought not to have capitulated, whatever the point of view. Why humiliate a Great Power we profess at the same time to regard as an equal? Why impose restrictions on it if we shall soon be obliged to withdraw them or extend them to our

own country? Why encourage the re-establishment of an enemy, or rather, why damp the ardour of a new alliance by discussing details? It is a case of being too severe or too indulgent. By perpetuating the sentimental atmosphere of the war, we should not only provoke justifiable revolts in Germany, but should be giving the Berlin Government the means of turning our miserable insecurity to account, and demanding tangible advantages in return for the dismissal of Seeckt, or prolongation of William the Second's exile.

This policy is still being pursued in 1927. It is perhaps the only policy compatible with the state of public opinion, and, on the other hand, it does not create an irreparable danger. We can always cool our heels on the Rhine for another eight years . . . but we must take care! During these years of relative calm, people's minds are turning in one direction or the other, submitting to be moulded either by the future or the past. If the old habits are not definitely discarded immediately after the convulsion, they will recover their ascendancy. Some day we may perhaps recognize that the slack time was the time when the real choice was made, just as we now see that it was so before the war.

OPTIMISM

It seems to us possible to insure a lasting peace without detracting from the prestige of France by making daily concessions. We have endeavoured to determine the con-

ditions which would enable us to speak firmly and plainly, as befits our rank. Restored to their true positions, Nationalists and Pacifists ought equally to uphold them.

The policy we have outlined is the one from which France can derive most honour and advantage, but it is also the one which will call for the greatest effort to cultivate a new spirit. In recommending it, we are taking an optimistic view of the vigour and youth of the country. It is a risk, but it is also a means of winning the stake.

Perhaps we have expected too much of our times and our régime. Perhaps the splendid freedom of spirit and of alliance which makes England's greatness, and the organization which makes that of Germany, are inconceivable in our case. Perhaps we may escape the bondage of our debts through misery, not through solidarity. Perhaps we may persist in a diplomatic anachronism similar to that which caused us to direct all our efforts for long against Austria, while Prussia was making headway. Perhaps we shall only have a mediocre, abject peace, maintained by threats of war, a peace in which men will be "too stupid to come to an understanding, and too cowardly to fight." Perhaps we shall live to see another carnage. Perhaps those who had dreamed of better things for their country may confess themselves defeated in the end. Perhaps . . . but they will first try their luck.

A NOTE ON THE TYPE
IN WHICH THIS BOOK IS SET

This book is composed in a type called Bodoni, named after its designer, Giambattista Bodoni (1740–1813) a celebrated Italian scholar and printer. He drew his letters with a mechanical regularity that is readily apparent on comparison with the less formal old style. Other characteristics that will be noted are the square serifs without fillet and the marked contrast between the light and heavy strokes.

SET UP AND PRINTED BY THE
VAIL-BALLOU PRESS, INC., BINGHAMTON, N.Y.
PAPER MANUFACTURED
BY S. D. WARREN CO., BOSTON.
BOUND BY H. WOLFF ESTATE,
NEW YORK.

DATE DUE

MAY 15 '68			
DEC 18 1972			
12/24/75			

170 IDEAL PRINTED IN U.S.A.

College of St. Thomas Library

61618

Fabre-Luce, Alfred

Locarno

BORZOI
BOOKS